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APRIL - JUNE 2000

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May

Leyland TDI - Glasgow Corp	£13.50
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June

Plaxton Paramount 3500 - Western National	£13.50
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Plaxton Panorama

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- 808** Bus & Coach Wales 2000. Buses. May 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with views of all entrants arriving and a survey of the rally site including the varied exhibits on this sunny summer day set amidst the splendour of Cardiff's municipal buildings.
- 798** Classic Automation. May 2000. UK. Preserved Buses. The 2000 event at Crowthorne, as usual the vehicles are seen using the amazing small roads network, concentrates on the visiting buses. 60 minutes.
- 797** York, UK. Buses. May 2000. 60 minutes filmed by Dave Spencer with First York buses in a multitude of livery variations. Good weather, fleet numbers announced to assist with I.D.
- 796** Leicester, UK. Buses. May 2000. 60 minutes filmed by Dave Spencer with fleet numbers announced. First Leicester in several colours plus Arriva Midland Fox fleet, sunny weather.
- 795** Llandudno, UK. April 2000. Buses Etc. The annual transport festival filmed on Bank Holiday Sunday at the end of April with the Crosville Bus Rally, also lorries and a taste of the other delights.
- 794** Ayrshire Coast, UK. Buses. April 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with a start at Greenock with small operators then Ardrossan, Saltcoats, Irvine and Ayr, plenty of Stagecoach AA/A1.
- 793** Glasgow, UK. Buses. April 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with a Saturday morning visit to the city centre with many buses in First Group corporate livery incl. artics, also Arriva, Stagecoach.
- 792** First Hampshire, UK. Buses. April 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer visiting Fareham and Southampton to capture scenes of the latest W Reg bus deliveries and as usual fleet numbers announced.
- 791** Reading, UK. Buses. April 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer with morning snow showers, latter months of former Mainline Routemaster operations, many locations around the town.
- 790** Italy. Buses. April 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer, by popular demand an entire programme of motor buses with scenes taken in Genoa (Genova), Milan (Milano), La Spezia and Turin (Torino). Includes the extensive museum collection at La Spezia.
- 786** Sheffield, UK. Trams. March 2000. Sheffield revisited in the Stagecoach ownership period with plenty of lineside road running sections, out of the way locations and cab rides, 1st all over ads.
- 785** London, UK. Buses. March 2000. 60 minutes by Dave Spencer. Scenes taken at Edgware Bus Station and surrounds then on to Golders Green and Trafalgar Square / Whitehall plus Shepherds Bush in Oct. 1998.
- 784** London, UK. Buses. March 2000. 60 minutes filmed by Dave Spencer which starts at Uxbridge around 08.30 then moves on to Harrow on the Hill bus station, lots of new bus deliveries for Sovereign and Metroliner.

PMP, 17 BIRCHWOOD DRIVE, LOWER PEOVER, CHESHIRE WA16 9QJ. Tel: 01565 722045 Fax: 01565 722 038 e-mail: dave@pmpvideo.fsnet.co.uk

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behind the original published schedule.
Proposed revised dates will be



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Guy Arab II utility, Great Yarmouth	£13.50
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Harrington, Maidstone & Dist. (No further orders)	

August 2000

Leyland TDI (open stair), Thames Valley	£13.50
Plaxton Paramount 3500, Western National	£13.50
Alexander Y (B), South Yorkshire	£13.50
Bristol VR III, Maynes of Manchester	£13.50
AEC RML, London, green	£13.50
Leyland Duple, Red & White	£13.50
Additional Item: Leyland TDI (open stair), Thames Valley (Showbus special)	£14.50

Additional dates to be announced:

Leyland PD1 h/br (DL), Lytham St Annes	£13.50
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Bedford OB, Edinburgh	£13.50
Alexander Atlantean, BOAC	£13.50
AEC RF, Blue Triangle - Essex	£13.50

July-September 2000 Releases

Plaxton

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Leyland TDI (open stair), Bolton	£12.50
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TfL MATTERS FOR US ALL

If you live outside the UK capital, Transport for London may seem as relevant to your local needs as its predecessor, London Transport, did before. A large organisation responsible for local transport policy and funding within one relatively small land area of a much larger country — but one which serves the most densely-populated area of these islands where most political and media power lies.

All of that may be true, but it doesn't diminish the importance of any other of our major cities to say that TfL is the organisation which looks most likely to shake up the way public transport is expected to operate in this new century.

Certainly, newly-installed Mayor Ken Livingstone has embarked early and promptly on a journey he hopes will take London's public transport along a quality route it hasn't travelled before. We'll need to wait to see if he delivers on his promises of banishing cattle truck standards to the dustbin of history, but as a politician who knows that transport is one of the few areas in which he has scope to achieve anything — and that there are Londoners' votes to be won and lost on the issue — he's going to have a good, hard try.

The omens are interesting. Maybe good, too.

The crew he has picked to ride with him on the TfL board (see 'News' page 6) is nothing if not familiar. Or familiar if you've even half-followed the London transport scene over the past 15 or more years. It's easy to dismiss his close allies from GLC days — Dave Wetzel and Paul Moore — as predictable has-beens, and indeed to say the same of the Tories' Steve Norris and excellent ex-London Buses boss David Quarmby; but their selection is inspirational.

These were the towering giants of London's public transport policy of recent years. We could laugh at Dave Wetzel's court appearance impersonating a gorilla, at his Right On insistence on not being addressed as Councillor Wetzel or of signing his letters 'Yours for Socialism'. We could snigger similarly (or was it enviously?) at Steve Norris's private life or at his mild gaffe of saying people didn't like to ride on public transport because of the awful people they might have to sit beside.

But all these eccentricities were signs of politicians of more substance than spin. Real people with a sense of humour as well as a clear sense of vision. People you would be happy to meet over a pint in the pub. Politicians who cared about improving public transport.

To relate them to the bus industry, these are the Brian Souters of British politics; visionary people who don't conform to the norms of a quiet life, who say what they believe, are prepared to make quantum leaps to try and achieve those goals — and are likely to charm the birds out of the trees in the process. Indeed, a meeting between Stagecoach's chairman and the TfL board could be an interesting, even fruitful one.

Even if they don't meet, the relationship between TfL and the major bus groups is going to be tough. One that could be far more openly hostile than the seething mutual resentment that seemed from the outside to characterise relations between the groups and LT. For Mayor Ken has laid it on the line that he doesn't expect TfL to feed shareholders' expectations of percentage profit margins in the high teens. He is saying openly what was said more discreetly by LT.

When few operators are bidding for many contracts (and it seems no one is bidding realistically, if at all, for route 13 — see 'In London'), and there's no on-street competition, he sees no reason why TfL and London's taxpayers should foot the bill. Nor that their margins should be driven up by driving down labour costs. Nor that TfL should be afraid of running more of its own buses.

If TfL changes those parameters, we could witness a turning point in the way the industry's big groups operate. Where they turn is more open to question. It may be to take a more modest approach to their margins or, at the other extreme, they might abandon London to small independents and TfL's own buses; after all, increasingly large pockets of rural and market town Britain are being deserted by the groups in favour of larger urban areas, so a move out of London isn't inconceivable.

What happens in London will impact on all of us.



ALAN MILLAR



Above:

With Ken Livingstone beginning to lay down the law to London's bus operators, fresh opportunities may arise for smaller operators. One which has just increased its presence on the capital's routes is Mitcham Belle which took over routes 200/201 on 17 June, using 10.2m and 10.7m Plaxton-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs.

LEE WHITEHEAD

EDITORIAL CONTRIBUTIONS

All articles, letters, press releases and colour photographs (we prefer to use transparencies where possible) should be sent to the Editor at: Buses, PO Box 3759, Glasgow, G41 5YN

Please send a stamped addressed envelope if you wish to have your photographs returned after use.

Fleet news reports (but not photographs) should be sent to the appropriate correspondents whose addresses are listed in the Fleet News sections.

*Buses is published
 on the third Friday
 of the month preceding
 cover date by:*

Ian Allan Publishing Ltd
 Riverdene Business Park
 Molesey Road
 Hersham
 Surrey KT12 4RG
 tel 01932 266600
 fax 01932 266601

Website: www.ianallanpub.co.uk/buses

E-mail: info@ianallanpub.co.uk

Editorial address:

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 PO Box 3759, Glasgow G41 5YN,
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ISSN 0007-6329

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Printed by Ian Allan Printing
 Tel: 01932 266600

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CURRENT ISSUES

around the industry

TfL TAKES OVER AS MAYOR KEN WARNS THE BIG GROUPS

After 67 years, London Transport ceased to be responsible for bus services in the UK capital on 3 July when the new Transport for London (TfL) organisation — chaired by Mayor Ken Livingstone — took over amid warnings of a 'get tough' approach to tendered bus service operators.

TfL, created as part of the change in London's government, has taken over LT's responsibilities for London Buses, Dial-a-Ride, Victoria Coach Station and London River Service (all of them incorporated as Transport Trading Ltd), while Croydon Tramlink, the Travel Information Call Centre, LT Museum, Lost Property and central support activities transferred to TfL 2000.

Though the Underground remains with LT until the completion of the Public Private Partnership, TfL also has responsibility for Docklands Light Railway, the Public Carriage Office which controls taxi and private hire vehicle licensing — and at one time licensed the capital's bus drivers — the roads, including traffic lights, the functions of the Traffic Director for London, the Highways Agency's previous London responsibilities and the Woolwich Ferry. Despite this expanded role, TfL doesn't get control of the national rail network in London, though it can tell what to do, at least up to a point.

The TfL board contains some names familiar from 1981-84 when LT was controlled by Ken Livingstone's Greater London Council. The most prominent of these are former GLC transport chair Dave Wetzel, his former deputy Paul Moore and Dr David Quarmbay, London Buses managing director from 1979 until 1985 and recently-appointed Millennium Dome chairman.

Two of the mayoral rivals, former Conservative transport minister Steve Norris (and one-time chairman of Capital Citybus), and the Liberal Democrats' Susan Kramer, are also on the board. The other members are railway trades unionists Jimmy Knapp and Tony West, the Transport & General Workers Union's Ollie Jackson and Joyce Mamode (a transport researcher and bus industry expert), Mike Hodgkinson, chief executive of airports operator BAA, Professors Stephen Glaister of London University Robert Lane of Westminster University and Kirsten Hearn, formerly senior local government officer with Waltham Forest council, who, as a blind

person, is an experienced campaigner for disability rights.

Ken Livingstone wants to attract fresh blood into TfL with a brief to make the organisation 'the best transport service organisation in the world'. Six senior management posts have been advertised, headed by a Commissioner of Transport for London. The other vacancies are for directors of bus, river and taxi services; integration; performance & finance; communication & public affairs; and corporate services.

The Mayor has also warned bus operators that TfL intends to get tough over tendered service contracts. At a conference in late-June, he said the London bus market has 'become a licence to steal money from Londoners' and said the low level of competition for contracts and reductions in relative levels of wage rates made it hard to justify margins of 16%.

'Those [bus companies] that are not prepared to work with us won't get their contracts renewed. We are not carrying people who want to get rich in what is a monopoly situation,' he warned. If necessary, he added that TfL is prepared to run more bus services directly, as has already happened with East Thames Buses which took over from Harris Bus in London.



The Trojan Horse?: Could East Thames Buses, running ex-Harris Bus vehicles like East Lancs-bodied Volvo Olympian 339 (P339 ROO), be just the start of large-scale direct operation by Transport for London?
LEE WHITEHEAD

CARDIFF BUS GETS IN TANDEM WITH BIKES

Cardiff Bus has begun a Sundays-only service for cyclists, in conjunction with the Brecon Beacons National Park Authority.

The Cardiff-Brecon service runs via Merthyr Tydfil, Talybont on Usk and the Garwnant visitor centre and is part of the 14-route Brecon Bus network run on Sundays and bank holidays by a variety of contracted operators which also includes Shamrock and First Cymru. There are two return journeys and the Dennis/Plaxton

Mini Pointer Dart used on the service pulls a trailer capable of carrying up to 24 bicycles.

An attendant is carried on the bus to help with cycle loading and a bicycle hire facility is also available at the visitor centre.

The bicycle trailer on a Cardiff Dart in Brecon
R. HOBBS



STATUS ACQUIRES STRATFORD BLUE

Status Group has expanded into Warwickshire by acquiring Newmark Coaches' Stratford Blue operations, based in Stratford-upon-Avon and operating to surrounding towns.

Newmark, whose parent company ran into financial difficulties, operates 12 buses and minibuses and 10 coaches, although Status's interest is understood to be confined to the rural bus operations which replaced services given up early last year when Stagecoach Midlands Red pulled out of Stratford.

Alan Newland, Newmark's managing director, is expected to remain in day-to-day charge with a stake in the business — following the same style of ownership as at

most of Status's other companies. It also appears that Status is unlikely to continue the leasing arrangements for some of the newest Stratford Blue vehicles.

Stagecoach's withdrawal from Stratford meanwhile helped prompt Warwickshire to buy its own fleet of four Mercedes-Benz Citaro 12m buses to lease to operators of tendered services. Status has indicated that it is interested in bidding for the services on which they will operate.

Stratford Blue Dennis Dart SLF/Marshall 5721 KNV arriving in Stratford earlier this year on a journey from Leamington Spa.
JOHN MARSH



A POINTER TO THE FUTURE FOR THOSE TIRED DARTLINES

Three used vehicle specialist companies have come up with a way of adding life to the 10-year-old Carlyle and Duple Dartline-bodied Dennis Darts coming on to the secondhand market.

Horsham-based Fleetmaster Bus & Coach, Boomerang Bus of Tewkesbury and MASS Engineering of Sheffield have teamed up to rebuild the buses with new-look interiors and replacement front ends for Plaxton Pointer bodies.

As Fleetmaster managing director Steve Swain explains, the Cromwell stainless steel structure of the Dartline body — originally envisaged as the only body for the Dart when Dennis and Duple were Hestair group subsidiaries — is sound. But it suffers from two major weaknesses which were overcome by the Pointer and other second generation Dart bodies. Those weaknesses are the

windscreen — which sticks out farther than the front bumper and consequently is vulnerable in even slow speed collisions in depots — and the shallow destination box built into the top of the windscreen. The Pointer front removes both weaknesses.

Fleetmaster is quoting prices of around £30,000 each for the rebuilt Darts which also have improved lighting, new trim materials and high visibility handrails.

H577 MOC, a Carlyle-bodied Dart rebuilt for Safeguard, Guildford with a Plaxton Pointer front.



FirstGroup plans US-style school bus fleet

FirstGroup is planning to win a bigger share of the UK school travel market by building up its own dedicated fleet of American-style yellow school buses.

It aims to use experience gained since it moved into the United States school transport market and hopes to bring a right-hand-drive Blue Bird yellow bus into the UK in August for a nationwide demonstration of what it hopes to achieve.

The plans are being drawn up partly to win back business lost to smaller operators, but also to make bus travel more attractive to the parents of schoolchildren who, today, are driven to and from school by private car.

According to research conducted for FirstGroup by the

Robert Gordon University in Aberdeen, only 1% of pupils at one primary school travel by bus and 61% go by car, yet 19% of primary school and 38% of secondary school parents claimed they would be prepared to use a dedicated bus service if it was reliable, and staffed by friendly drivers.

FirstGroup argues that funding for yellow buses could be found from money raised by workplace parking and congestion charges. Chief executive Moir Lockhead says: 'It will provide the flexible, safe and reliable service that will persuade parents to let their children travel to school by bus.' He also believes it will reduce the risk of accidents around schools and cut peak hour congestion.

Connex uses feeder bus link to tempt rail authority

Connex has launched its Lewes-Uckfield rail-feeder bus service in Sussex as part of its bid to have its south-east England rail franchises renewed.

The hourly service feeds into rail services at either end and is being introduced as a first step towards re-introducing the Lewes-Uckfield rail line which closed in 1969; if the Strategic Rail Authority renews Connex's South Central and South Eastern franchises, the French-owned company says it will also introduce feeder buses on two other routes, Tenterden-Rye and Midhurst-Pulborough.

It was originally expected that the Coach Connex service would be operated with the company's three ex-London United Dennis Darts, but they are being retained as back-up vehicles while the service is being operated by a pair of new Plaxton-bodied low-floor Darts.



Connex Bus Dart DP63 (W363 ABD) at Lewes station.
LEE WHITEHEAD

BUS PEOPLE

Stagecoach Manchester managing director **Mark Threapleton** has taken up the new post within the group as UK bus division operations director. As a result, Stagecoach Fife MD **Tom Wileman** has moved to Manchester and Fife operations director **Robert Andrew** has become MD.

The latest stage of FirstGroup's regionalising moves sees the Rider Group and Mainline operations gaining a shared service centre at Leeds. First Huddersfield MD **Mick Herdman** also becomes MD at Calderline while Mainline's Rotherham and Doncaster operations come under MD **Bernard Keane**.

Catherine Mason, a food industry marketing specialist who latterly handled global strategic marketing for United Biscuits, is taking up the new post of director of marketing with Arriva Passenger Services.

London Traveller managing director **Steve Devereaux** has left the company.

Former FirstGroup chairman **Trevor Smallwood** has become chairman of Automotive & Management Development, part of Transfed, the training organisation for the bus, coach and taxi industries.

Senior Volkswagen director **Ferdinand Piëch** has become chairman of Scania, following VW's partial takeover of the Swedish bus and truck manufacturer.

Surge helps sales stay ahead in first half

New bus and coach registrations are running 6.2% ahead of last year, according to the latest industry statistics.

Thanks to a surge in deliveries in June, the Society of Motor Manufacturers & Traders figures for the first half of this year were up from 2,690 in 1999 to 2,857; a continued fall in sales of van-derived chassis like the Mercedes-Benz Vario (from 395 to 280) was outweighed by a leap in deliveries of purpose-designed vehicles from 2,295 to 2,577 (up from 365 to 441 in June alone as manufacturers caught up with some delayed deliveries).

Over the half year, Volvo and Dennis have continued to run nearly neck and neck, with two thirds of the purpose-designed market between them (Volvo has nearly 35% and Dennis nearly 32%); Irisbus is shown in third place, but we understand its figures include van-derived DailyBus models.

Optare is in a strong position with 6.5% of the market for the first half, and has recently supplied Wilts & Dorset — one of its most loyal customers —

with the first four of an order for eight Mercedes-Benz-engined Excel 2 11.8m 43-seaters.

Mercedes-Benz itself is showing a rise in market share (from 2.4% to 2.8%), but Scania, DAF and MAN have all experienced substantial drops.

Recent Mercedes-Benz deliveries include low-floor Mercedes-Benz O.405N crew transfer buses for British Airways at Gatwick, with Caetano Cobus bodywork equipped with external access to their luggage lockers.

TIM CARTER



YELLOW BUSES SHOWN RED CARD OVER WAGE DOCKING

In what is being seen as a landmark case, an industrial tribunal has ruled that council-owned Yellow Buses of Bournemouth must repay £52 it docked from a driver's pay after the money was stolen by an opportunist thief.

The Transport & General Workers Union, which had pursued the case, says it overturns 25 years of custom and practice in the bus industry and means operators can no longer deduct losses from drivers if they are robbed in the course of work.

In this particular case, a youth — who was later arrested — stole £52 from the driver's cash tray and Yellow Buses deducted the sum from the driver's wages because his takings were £52 short of the amount shown on the read-out from his ticket machine. The tribunal held that the deduction contravened the terms of the 1977 Unfair Contract Terms Act.

REGISTRATION NOTES

by DAVID J. STANIER

Middlesbrough Vehicle Registration Office closed in March and was replaced by a new office at Stockton which, as already reported, will issue letters NN to NT under the new registration scheme starting next year.

It's still not clear what will happen next year when vehicles of uncertain age are registered (they currently receive Q-prefixed marks) and how the new Select registration system will operate.

Readers may be aware that 'attractive' numbers are generally withheld for eventual use in the Select market. Car model numbers are again in this group and, I understand, many seemingly ordinary numbers ending in zero or five have also entered this category.

NO GREAT ORME DONE

Further to last month's news item about Conwy Council seeking tenders for the provision of Great Orme bus tours in Llandudno, it has emerged that a Yorkshire-based company provided a double-deck tourist service on the route between mid-April and early-May.

Great Orme Explorer began operating on the Marine Drive on 17 April, using a closed top ex-Greater Manchester Leyland Atlantean and an open-top Bristol VR, but its failure to register the route as a local bus service led to its abrupt withdrawal on 3 May. Alpine Travel has been operating tours of the Orme since that date.



Great Orme Explorer Atlantean UNA 864S in Llandudno on the first day of its short-lived operation.

LEN RICKETTS

OOPS! As several readers (and the photographer) pointed out, last month's photograph of a Smit coach was taken in Biddeford and not Barnstaple — and the photograph was by Kevin Lane.

Open-top competition hots up in York...

Competition on open-top tours in York has been stepped up as a result of First York taking over the tours previously run by York Pullman.

Peter Dew, Pullman's manager, didn't join First York and instead has set up his own company, Top Line Travel, which has entered into a marketing arrangement with Peter Newman's global City Sightseeing brand and is using ex-London MCW Metrobuses supplied by Mr Newman's Ensignbus dealership.

Guide Friday has responded to the competition by running additional buses in York and by cutting its prices in June to £3 for adults, students and senior citizens and £6 for a family of two adults and up to two children.

Top Line Travel Metrobus BYX 115V in City Sightseeing livery in York.

DAVID LONGBOTTOM



...Lothian launches lopped-off Leopard

Lothian Buses has begun operating OSJ 636P, the open-top Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard which chief executive Neil Renilson brought with him from Stagecoach Western. It has been christened The Royal Park Charabanc and operates six times daily around Edinburgh's Queen's Park. It is seen here next to Dunsapie Loch, in part of this attractive park land close to the city centre.

picture by RICHARD WALTER



THE FENTON FILE

FENTON

MIKE FENTON returns to the theme of his first Fenton File —
a Leyland repatriated from the Far East

The subject of the first Fenton File — in January 1997 — was an Alexander-bodied Leyland repatriated from Singapore. That was a 1979 Leopard and this month I return to the theme with a prototype B45 Olympian with R-type body built as a Leyland demonstrator, exhibited at the 1980 Motor Show and then sent to Singapore where it was registered SBS 5396 in May 1981.

Some time later, having fulfilled its remit, the Leyland returned to the UK and was acquired by City of Oxford Motor Services. It took a conventional registration — rather than a Q plate — as PWL 999W with matching fleetnumber 999 in the series that identifies buses that are too high to pass beneath Oxford station railway bridge.

Some changes were made to the body before it went into service on park-&-ride routes, notably replacement of the deep sliding tropical windows, substitution of an ECW-style windscreen and grille and a reduction in its seating capacity. It is shown here early in its UK career, in July 1987, in a white livery with red, blue and grey stripes.

Meanwhile, Singapore Bus Services put into service the first of 200 two-axle Olympians, followed by a similar number of 12m three-axle versions and

then equivalent two and three-axle Volvo Olympians; all were bodied by Alexander.

No.999 has again been in the news in recent months having been acquired for preservation at the Oxford Bus Museum at Long Hanborough.



CELEBRATE A CENTURY OF BRITISH MOTORBUSES with BUSES and PRESERVED BUS

BUSES and PRESERVED BUS, in conjunction with Aston Manor Transport Museum, are organising a major event on Saturday 5 August.

Centred on the Aston Manor Transport Museum in Birmingham, there will also be a display of buses down the ages at nearby Aston Hall, with a connecting bus service which also serves central Birmingham.

Aston Manor Transport Museum — housed in a former Birmingham City Transport tram depot — is well worth a visit, with a fine collection of Midlands buses housed in a fine building redolent with transport atmosphere, and the display at Aston Hall will chart the history of the British motorbus to the present day.

Admission is only £1.50 for adults, 75p concessions and £4 family ticket. There is a free bus service every half hour starting from Hill Street (stop H), and the museum itself is a short walk from Witton station.

Enquiries 0121 322 2298

BuAug/k

BUSES

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The following publications are now available from LOTS:

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- **London Bus and Tram Fleetbook 2000**
Unbeatable value — up-to-date to March 2000, includes all the operators in London and the home counties in one handy sized publication, including the Tramlink fleet. Order now, before stocks run out. £6.50 (£6.00 to members).
- **SUP41A - London Single Deckers — Where are they now?**
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Advance notice: The LOTS Autumn Transport Spectacular is to be held at Pickett Lock on 4th November 2000



MAN aims to become number three

MAN, currently Western Europe's fourth largest bus and coach manufacturer after DaimlerChrysler, Volvo and Irisbus, says it is aiming to become the third largest within the next three to four years.

The German company which recently acquired Polish manufacturer Star and British truck maker ERF to add to its bus manufacturing activities in Germany and Turkey, has been subject of merger speculation of late — including the possibility of an alliance with Volkswagen's Scania and Fiat's Iveco which also is the dominant partner in Irisbus.

At a recent presentation in Spain, the company said it is now the second most profitable bus and truck manufacturer in Western Europe and that, year on year, it has increased bus and coach orders by 25% and turnover by 7%. In the first 10 months of the current year, it has taken orders for 4,330 vehicles.

A significant factor behind its expansion has been the growth in chassis rather than complete vehicle production, as relationships with local bodybuilders are helping build up business outside Germany and

especially in Spain which, like the UK, is supplied by independent bodybuilders. Chassis sales have almost doubled to around 1,300 a year and MAN expects that to rise to 1,500 in the current year.

In its home market, MAN enjoyed a German market share of almost 22%, making it second only to DaimlerChrysler's EvoBus and it is aiming to sell 25% within three years. Its share of the German bus market is 38.4%.

Evidence of its growth has been the development of the NL313F 15m low-floor chassis to complement the integral 15m NL which has been selling well in Germany and Austria to the tune of over 200 vehicles, including 70m for BVG in Berlin. The 15m chassis has secured an order from Barcelona and is part of a family of extra-long buses that also includes 13.5 and 13.8m models.

Below:

An MAN NL313 15m bus with bodywork by Spanish coachbuilder Castrosua.

Bottom:

MAN has developed this three-door, 7.6m integral midibus in conjunction with Italian bodybuilder Autodromo. Although it carries 40 passengers, only 10 are seated.



STAGECOACH ORDERS TRIDENTS FOR COACH USA

Stagecoach has revealed plans for a £7.5 million investment in brand new British-built sightseeing buses for Coach USA.

It's buying 30 three-axle Dennis Tridents with Alexander ALX500 bodies for its sightseeing operations in New York, where new vehicles will contrast sharply with the generally old and not always smartly presented ex-British double-deckers which tour Manhattan.

Coach USA chief executive Frank Gallagher says: 'Some of the old buses on our city streets have given double-deckers a bad name, but these new coaches are already operating in cities around the world. New York deserves the best and will get the best.'

The low emission buses will be left-hand-drive versions of Tridents

operated in Hong Kong, with air conditioning and open top decks. They are to be fully built-up in Britain and deliveries are expected to begin early next year.

Stagecoach chief executive Keith Cochrane says: 'New Yorkers have a very bad image of double-decker buses because most of the vehicles they see are old. We hope our investment will show New York that new double-deckers are no threat to the environment.'

The investment follows Stagecoach's publication of its annual results, showing an 11% rise in pretax profits to £244 million and news that it is to centralise some of the functions at Coach USA to improve its financial performance.

GUIDE FRIDAY ADDS NEOPLANS

Guide Friday has added seven more new double-deckers to L'Open Tour, the Paris open-top operation it runs in partnership with Cityrama and city transport operator RATP.

While its other 12 Paris double-deckers all are East Lancs-bodied Volvo B10Ms, this time it's bought German-built Neoplans based on its double-deck bus design. Their key benefit is a top deck capacity of 61 seats, making them potentially highly profitable tour vehicles.



Civis hits the jackpot with Las Vegas quintet

The Regional Transportation Commission of Clark County, Nevada has ordered five Irisbus Civis optically-guided articulated buses — the first Irisbus products to be sold into North America.

All five are due to start running on the third busiest Las Vegas bus route in May 2002. They will be diesel-electric versions, driving through hub electric motors — a key technical reason behind the RTC's decision to buy these rather than other models already established on the United States market.

They will operate along the 12km long Las Vegas Boulevard North and will be guided by Civis's unique system of being steered by a line painted on the road surface. Total cost of the investment, including off-bus fare collection and other infrastructure, will be \$12.5 million; funding is by Clark County and the US federal government.

VOLVO MOVES AHEAD INTO CHINA

Volvo's global bus manufacturing ambitions have been further satisfied by entering into a joint venture with Chinese manufacturer Shanghai Automotive Industry Corporation.

The 50/50 venture creates a company which will build on Volvo's already strong presence in the Chinese market for inter-city buses and coaches. SAIC's current production of around 2,500 city and commuter buses will form the base of the new joint venture which is expected ultimately to be integrated with Volvo's future ranges.

'With this agreement, I am convinced that we can secure a place as one of the leading producers in the growing Chinese market for city buses,' says Volvo Bus Corporation president Jan Engström. 'We project that China will become the world's largest market for citybuses.'

Volvo has been in negotiation with SAIC for some time and is

the latest of several high profile Western automotive companies to establish joint ventures with the Shanghai company. Others include car manufacturers Volkswagen and General Motors and component makers Bosch, ZF, Visteon and Valeo.

Meanwhile, Volvo has secured an increased order from Kowloon Motor Bus in Hong Kong for a further 100 Polish-built Super Olympian low-floor double-deckers. KMB was the first customer for the three-axle Super Olympian, taking 60 British-built examples in 1998/99 and its first 29 Polish versions which have recently been delivered.

All 129 of the Polish-built chassis are coming with Alexander ALX500 bodies, 29 manufactured at Alexander's joint venture Chinese plant in Xiamen; the next 100 will be assembled by KMB from British-made kits.

LONG COACHES BARRED FROM YOSEMITE

The tourist industry in California's Yosemite National Park has been hit by enforcement of a state law which bans coaches over 40ft long from the narrow, twisting Highway 120 into the park.

Given that each coach load of passengers spends around \$5,000 in the local economy, the move has been greeted with dismay, especially as the 45ft coach — with 55 passengers to a typical 40ft model's 47 — has become a Californian standard. Indeed, the MCI

Renaissance coach is only available at this length.

The impact of the ruling, which state police say is comparatively easy to enforce as long coaches are obviously 5ft longer, has been made worse because the national park authorities are trying to encourage more park-&-ride and other public transport alternatives to large scale use of cars.

An MCI Renaissance 45ft coach of Silverstar Coaches, San Francisco at speed on California's Interstate 80.

MICHAEL DRYHURST



Adelaide considers building another guided bus line

The South Australian government has authorised a detailed engineering study to add another line to Adelaide's pioneering guided bus network.

The study will establish if there is a viable case to go ahead with a southern extension which would include underpasses to clear existing railways and roads. Preliminary studies have already shown that the guided bus route could cut the duration of commuter journeys by between 10 and 17 minutes.

The opportunities for private funding will also be investigated before a decision is taken on whether to add the route to the government's 10-year transport plan.

LEFT-HOOKER VRs FOR PANAMA

An operator in Panama City, Central America is buying left-hand-drive Bristol VRT double-deckers from double-deck export specialist Bristol Bus & Coach Sales, reports ALLAN MACFARLANE.

The first VRs sent to Panama simply had doorways inserted into the right hand side, but others are being converted to left-hand-drive with a right hand platform. A similar scheme was started for a New York operator, but was aborted soon after.

This time, the buses are becoming the basis of overall advertising contracts in a city not normally associated with British double-deckers.

The front of the bodywork and chassis is dismantled, then the underframe for the cab floor is moved to the left hand side, together with the air cylinder and pedals. The electrical master panel, originally below the cab offside window, is detached from the main cables below the floor and reassembled on the left of the new cab, as are the switches and the spring parking brake.

The front right hand chassis frame member is modified for the resited platform and doorway, but the position of the staircase means the new door is only two thirds of the width of the original.



CONNEX TO BE PART OF VIVENDI FLOAT

Connex and the other public transport interests of French conglomerate Vivendi are to be floated off from the main company, following a massive corporate deal.

In a £66 billion transaction, Vivendi is taking over Canadian media and drinks giant Seagram and is to be renamed Vivendi Universal as it adds Hollywood's Universal Studios to the French group's multi-faceted activities.

The Seagram drinks business is being sold and Vivendi's

utilities business, based around CGEA (Compagnie Générale des Eaux) water operations, is to be floated off as a separate business, with Vivendi Universal retaining a 65% controlling stake. A break-up of Vivendi had been expected for some time before the deal with Seagram.

Consequently, the group's bus, train and refuse collection businesses across Europe will form part of this less glamorous offshoot.

Moscow to buy 286 more Ikarus artics

Moscow's transport authority has placed a \$28.2 million order with Irisbus for 286 additional Ikarus articulated single-deckers.

The order is divided between a further 246 old-style Ikarus 280 underfloor engined 16.5m long models to be manufactured in Hungary, and 40 rear-engined 18m long Ikarus 435s (similar to the 480 and 481 models sold in the UK on DAF chassis); the 435s will be supplied as completely

knocked down kits for assembly by Moscow coachbuilder Tuschino Avto. The cooperation with the Moscow bodybuilder has been running for seven years and will have produced over 2,000 buses by the end of this year.

Delivery will run between August and the end of the year.

The Russian market has remained one of the most important to Ikarus, even after the collapse of the old USSR.

DRIVE IN A BUS LANE —FOR FREE!

On the same day as the *Evening Standard* carried an advert for a Director of Integration for TfL (see 'News' page 6), the paper also carried a story demonstrating the lack of joined-up thinking we all know and love in the transport world.

It may be illegal to drive in a bus lane (unless you're a bus, of course), but it's also illegal to fine people for doing it. Apparently the London boroughs involved are empowered to issue penalties for infringing bus lanes, but they're not allowed to enforce it, which makes the legislation seem pretty daft. So while the rest of the country cries out for bus lane enforcement cameras, all the ones we have in London have been turned off.

It's hoped one day the boroughs will be allowed to enforce fines and those cameras can be turned on again. In the meantime, the police can still fine you for driving in the bus lanes, but the boroughs can't.

Demise of a much-loved map

One of the oldest features of bus operation in London is, or was, the London Bus Map. The old London General Omnibus Company was issuing them before World War 1, and at times in the late 1920s when in the summer months in particular route extensions and new routes were being introduced in profusion, they came out about every month.

In more recent times about two a year (but irregularly spaced) has seemed to be about the norm. But now, surprise, surprise, LT has quietly dropped its All London Bus Map, apparently in favour of four separate maps, each covering a quarter of Greater London. Clarity is improved, as the scale is much more generous. There are also town centre plans for larger places such as Hounslow, though these do not show individual bus stops.

In addition, the people who did the maps did not have enough liaison with those who did the list of routes on the back. Less frequent routes and those which do not run their full length every day, such as the 53 (Oxford Circus-Plumstead Common) have route numbers in red. That is because at times some journeys

run on to Plumstead Station. The use of red might be a good idea — except that on the maps themselves such routes are shown in black. This is potentially confusing, particularly as other important well-used routes do not run in quite the same form on Sundays.

The maps themselves are otherwise fine and attractive, but if you are just a local traveller, you make use of one of the 36 area maps or guides issued by LT. If you travel more widely, you probably need an all-London map. Luckily Mike Harris has been producing his own Greater London Bus Maps for a few years now: the latest issue is no 12. They cost a modest £1.50, with part of the revenue going to a different charity each time.

A further gripe is the issue dates of the four new maps, April 2000. Great, except that there were a host of route changes on 29 April (which are not included) and Croydon Tramlink. An even bigger nonsense is that the Tramlink enquiry office in Croydon is still issuing 1998-dated maps to the public.

NEW CONTRACTS, NEW OPERATOR

A big surprise in one of the latest tender announcements is another newcomer — Durham Travel Services, best known for its National Express work. Not that long ago DTS sold its York Pullman operations to First York, but now it is to make a new foray much farther away from home. Its new operation will begin in December, when it takes over the 185 (Victoria-Lewisham) from Stagecoach Selkent. It intends to trade as London Easylink, and will need 15 low-floor double-deckers plus spares for the route.

That same round of tenders produced other surprises too. Stagecoach Selkent also lost the P3 (London Bridge-Peckham-New Cross Gate), once a very local route, but one that now goes farther afield (and back). It is unusual in having its highest vehicle requirement on a Saturday, and has been won by London Central. The route will also be renumbered, to 343, at the same time.

Another win for London Central is of route 188 from North Greenwich

to Russell Square, to which it was inexplicably cut back some months ago, severing its useful link to Euston, only about quarter of a mile away. At present it is operated by Arriva London. Selkent retains the 47 (Shoreditch-Catford) and the N47: the latter is at present shared with London Central, but that arrangement will cease. All these other changes will involve new low-floor double-deckers. The 188 moves in November, the P3/343 in January.



Changing times:
Stagecoach Selkent
T813, one of its
fast-disappearing
class of Leyland
Titons at Lewisham
on the 185, the
route being taken
over by London
Easylink.
LEE WHITEHEAD

CHANGES OUT WEST

Over on the other side of London, First CentreWest has won a five-year contract for the 27 (Turnham Green-Camden Town) from November. The route is at present run by London United from its Stamford Brook garage and indeed is the main route worked there. Peak requirement is 18 buses, and new low-floor double-deckers are expected early in 2001: FirstGroup will meanwhile use double-deckers from its existing fleet.

CentreWest has also won the 295 (Ladbroke Grove-Clapham Junction) from London General, with 20 low-floor single-deckers replacing 17 Metrobuses.

A problem has arisen with Routemaster-operated route 13 (Aldwych-Golders Green), at present run by London Sovereign's leased Routemasters on weekdays, with the evening, Sunday and night buses worked by Metroline using driver-only buses. The bids received apparently 'fell

short of expectations,' — and it is rumoured that Sovereign did not bid — so the current arrangements will continue until next summer. Routemasters will continue to be available to the new operator of the route, but bids with fully-accessible double-deckers will also be considered.

Another interesting development, foreshadowed in this column a few months ago, is with route 135 (Marble Arch-Camden Town-Archway), run by Metroline on a contract due to expire in December. The route is to vanish, probably by the end of September, and will be partly covered by a better frequency on the 134 (Tottenham Court Road-North Finchley), also operated by Metroline, and by extension of London General-operated route 88 (Clapham Common-Oxford Circus) to Camden Town. It makes a pleasant change to see a London bus route actually being lengthened.

LAST REPORT FROM 'LURPAC'

It is with some sadness that I have received the last annual report to be produced by the London Regional Passengers Committee. A new organisation, called the London Transport Users Committee, took over on 3 July, covering not only bus, tram and rail users but also road users.

LRPC had lasted 16 years, and took up the cudgels on the passenger's behalf on many issues. Chairman Sir Alan Greengross considers that two of its greatest achievements were in persuading LT and British Rail to merge the Travelcard and Capitalcard to create a single, multi-modal ticket valid on all public transport in London, and in

persuading Parliament not to deregulate London's buses.

A more recent achievement was to get LT to continue to operate route 130 (Croydon-New Addington) after Tramlink began running, though it is disappointed that this is only for an experimental period of three months. Its final report says that so far passenger levels on the 130 are remaining high.

Another achievement I rate highly has been what the LRPC describes as a *cause celebre* — route 726 (now Bromley-Heathrow Airport). This former Green Line route is still running as a result, and 'despite numerous attempts by LT to see it withdrawn.'

One of the LRPC's successes was to campaign for the retention of former Green Line route 726, for which Tellings-Golden Miller recently bought new Volvo B10BLEs with Alexander ALX300 bodies. GEOFF RIXON



Drivers from afar

There are no signs of any real improvement in driver recruitment for London operators. But London General and London Central have benefited from what was originally London General's initiative in going further afield: you may recall it has had a bus and recruitment set-up at Plymouth Citybus, and has recruited staff from there for some years. More recent initiatives have been over a much wider area, with considerable successes. Taunton, Barrow-in-Furness, Lincoln, Norwich, Lowestoft, Stockton-on-Tees have all yielded recruits, with private rented accommodation arranged for as long as they want it, and stay with the company.

Arriva has a different approach. Twenty drivers from Arriva Scotland West are taking a 12-

week sojourn in London, working from Tottenham Garage on a mix of one-person and Routemaster-operated routes. Also working for Arriva London are drivers from Merseyside. The reorganisation there following the acquisition of MTL left a substantial surplus of drivers. None were made redundant, but some have taken the opportunity to work in London, with accommodation provided as well as travel between London and Merseyside. The Arriva men all receive London pay rates.

Among the more distinctive recent developments by Arriva London was the introduction of Dennis/Plaxton Mini Pointer Darts on a shuttle service for National Health Service employees. PDL18 (W138 VGJ) is seen at the Elephant & Castle. GEOFF RIXON



Common Bus DA12 (W612 MW), one of its 8.6m Alexander ALX300-bodied Dennis Darts in Kewington Lane on route 322. GEOFF RIXON

MILLAR'S *Tales*

THE EDITOR'S SIDEWAYS LOOK AT BUS AND COACH EVENTS

WRITE DIRECT TO MILLAR'S TALES

Please send any stories, photos (prints or slides), cuttings and other information on off-beat bus matters direct to:

Buses
PO Box 3759, Glasgow, G41 5YN

Whatever happened to...? ...Lowland, Midland Bluebird and SEBIL

I've dived back 10 years to see what *Buses* was reporting in August 1990 and find that Sandy Macdonald was announcing the first two sales in the Scottish Bus Group privatisation programme.

Lowland Scottish had gone first, to its management and employees, followed by Midland Bluebird to GRT Holdings. The Lowland deal gave 40% of the equity to the management, 25% to employees and 35% to financial institutions and was, in fact, the first of the deals to go through.

Looking back, it's fascinating to be reminded of the other names in the frame in the industry's second systematic round of privatisation. For the Lowland deal had been achieved in the face of a shortlist that also included GRT and Proudmutual, the management owners of Northumbria Motor Services, Lowland's adjoining operator directly across the English border; earlier bids had been submitted by Caldaire (which owned West Riding and United), Stagecoach, Yorkshire Traction and SEBIL.

SEBIL? That was short for South East Bus Investments Ltd, a company owned jointly by East Kent, Maidstone & District, Brighton & Hove, Eastern Counties and Cambus and set up to bid for other companies. It missed out in Scotland and fizzled out even before its shareholders were taken over by Stagecoach, British Bus, Go Ahead and GRT.

GRT's successful bid for Midland was its first major acquisition and came a little over a year after it had been formed to buy Grampian Transport in Aberdeen — little did we know it then, but this was the birth of what five years later would become FirstGroup.

By then, GRT had acquired Lowland and neighbouring SMT as the management-owned companies soon sold out to the emerging groups and, today, all three trade as First Edinburgh with the Midland and Lowland parts forming the Central Scotland & Borders operation within the far more centralised structures which FirstGroup is introducing across the country.

A FOR-GORTON SOLUTION

If only they'd done this 50 years ago, perhaps the DD42 would have been an outstanding success. And what will they do on Wednesday?



BEAM ME UP, STAGECOACH

Has sibling rivalry prompted Stagecoach's chairman to try and rival his sister's purchase of a Scottish castle? Or is this hitherto unknown venture by the bold Brian — discovered by Gavin Booth — a way of making sure the coast is clear before Mrs Gloag's Wee Knitting Buses next surprise the City?

CZECH OUT THIS MANX TALE

My thanks to David Cole for discovering this poster of an Isle of Man Road Services Leyland PD3/MCW Orion in the unlikely location of a pedestrian subway deep below the city of Brno in the Czech Republic. Apparently it's

one of a series used to publicise an advertising agency and this one highlighted the attractions of the city's bus station. Sadly, he tells me there were no PD3s there, but the Czech Karosas offer their own brand of native charm.



A case of National discrimination?

Dave Farrier spotted a curious piece of discrimination at Dover docks that seems to favour the superbly turned out, if verging on ancient P&O Stena Leyland Nationals for foot passengers against all other examples of the breed.

On the other hand, if the others betray the Euro Minus 3 emission characteristics of Heysham Travel 6203, the one-time Ribble National 2 which Stagecoach has had the questionable pleasure of re-inheriting from Arriva North West — and which D'arcy Ryan snapped in Lancaster on 22 June — then it's hardly surprising that they're not allowed in the same pristine company.



BUSES

LINCOLN'S PRIDE AND JOY

You can thank M. L. Weyell for unearthing this month's offering of an unlikely bus subject for a British commercial postcard.

It's of Lincoln's now demolished St Mark's bus station — or 'omnibus station' as the 1960s lettering spells out — and the view includes highbridge Lincolnshire Road Car Bristol K6A 2119 (DFW 354) squeezing its way under the canopy with what looks like a fraction of an inch to spare.

The really clever bit was to cater for the lamp standard enthusiast market, too, by including the fetching (perhaps even illuminating?) structure on the far right of the picture. The publisher, incidentally, wasn't one of the commercial postcard companies, but Road Car itself as a way of publicising the breadth of services it offered.

Last month's item on postcards of Preston bus station prompted Peter White to dig out what he says was a possibly ironic birthday gift presented to him last year; as he suspected, in that copy of *Boring Postcards* by Phaidon Press, the upper of the two Preston cards was to be seen alongside other commercial cards of Ashton under Lyne and Hanley bus stations — as well as motorway service areas, 1960s shopping centres and caravan parks.

Now there's a challenge. Who among you is going to be first to send me a commercial postcard of Hanley bus station? Usual £10 fee for this and any others we haven't yet seen.



Vanishing bus stops and virtual buses

Something like 40 to 50 years separate these two bus stop signs in rural Nottinghamshire.

Geoff Coxon, who found them, says the cast metal plate still shows East Midland green and is a rare example of a surviving fare stage which, if you're too young to know about such things, was the point at which you could be thrown off if your ticket didn't entitle you to travel farther.

And why is the non-corrosive aluminium Pathfinder sign fixed so far up the telegraph pole that you might need binoculars to read the route numbers? Could it have anything to do with the black market value of aluminium and an incident which occurred in Luton a few weeks back?

Ian Brown of Hemel Hempstead tells me burglars broke into Arriva The Shires & Essex's workshops and helped themselves to 149 bus stop signs, 40 timetable frames and 100 diversion signs, total value of which is around £7,500. As a police spokeswoman put it:

'These are obviously very strange things to steal and would be noticeable if the burglars tried to sell them on.'

Unless they're just latching on to another bizarre tale from the periphery of the known bus universe. For an artist called Kasia Howard recently won a £4,000 grant to film all the bus routes in Banbury with commentary from commuters, put them on the internet and let surfers take a virtual bus ride. She might need a virtual bus stop.



NO BOOMS, BUT THIS TROLLEY'S GOT BLOOMS

Michael Dryhurst (who else?) spotted this flower kiosk at the junction of Market and Spear streets in San Francisco.

Although the livery bears no obvious resemblance to anything he associates with Muni, the city's public transport operator, he recognises more than a hint of a Marmon-Herrington — that's an American trolleybus, by the way, not a Toff's affected way of pronouncing the name of a dorsal-finned coach for the devout folk of Salt Lake City.

Michael, incidentally, was particularly taken by the Stagecoach

Supertram pub sign I showed last month, as the pub is part of a chain called Commer Inns. 'Do they, I ponder here in beer-bland California, do they at 'The Travellers Rest' offer Avenger Ale, Superpoise Stout and TS3 Bitter?' he asks. 'And that's a query, not a Commer.'



20 YEARS AGO

The news last month that Dublin Bus is to be privatised and the Irish capital's bus network put out to competitive tender makes it all the more appropriate that, exactly 20 years ago, we were reporting on exciting plans to improve the city's bus services.

A report from an organisation called the Transport Consultative Commission had come up with a quick fix plan to rescue Dublin's transport from complete collapse caused by a huge backlog in investment by Coras Iompair Eireann (CIE) and rampant illegal car parking.

In August 1980 *Buses*, we revealed that the TCC wanted to back buses in the short to medium term, rather than investing in expensive light rapid transit systems, and that a Dublin Transportation Authority was to be established to kick CIE into action. We also reported that 92 RA-class Leyland PD3s (around 20 years old although their body design made them appear more like 50-year-olds) were lingering on in service, but new buses were at last on the way with CIE talking of putting 520 Shannon-built Bombardiers over the next four years.

Significantly, there was no talk then of privatisation or, indeed, of breaking CIE up into the smaller units which have since appeared, but the bold talk of bus priorities, traffic enforcement and rising passenger numbers was an early hint of the sensationally successful Quality Bus Corridor initiatives of much more recent years.



MAP OF THE MONTH

Hampshire's network map comes in for BARRY S. DOE's scrutiny this month — and he's not impressed

In May's 'Map of the Month', I praised Staffordshire for its good work. It has subsequently gone one stage further and published its first-ever county-wide system map and frequency guide. Space precludes more detail here, but it is well worth obtaining (phone: 01785 223344).

This month I look at Hampshire, a county that for several years has had around a dozen area timetables, each with local maps, and complemented by a county-wide map; the 2000/01 edition was published in May.

The first thing to deal with is where to obtain a copy. I think I will have a hit squad out for saying 01962 846924, for Hampshire prefers to be non-contactable. It has withdrawn its enquiry line, though the map is happy to quote enquiry lines for Surrey, West Sussex, Wiltshire and London Transport, as well as for six railway companies, 34 bus operators and no fewer than eight ferry operators. It also adds the phone numbers of 24 tourist information centres, 13 dial-a-ride schemes and lists 33 websites — including that of the Automobile Association.

England's green and green . . . and green and pleasant land

One side of this Pindar map shows the whole of this vast county. Considering the wide differences in terrain — including the New Forest and the Test Valley to mention but two — the background is a boring pale green with no relief added. To make matters worse, every route is blue with red numbers, despite some being quarter-hourly and others once weekly.

Places of tourist significance are added, but only as a mauve square whatever their type or significance. Railways are added in green (with green stations) except the Watercress Line which is mauve. Yes, basically this is a green, blue and mauve map with black names. Surrounding counties are white.

In past years I criticised this map for putting Southampton and Portsmouth in boxes and simply listing the operators in those areas, telling readers to contact them for details. Well, it listened, and has removed the boxes, but sadly it misunderstood the point, for it has still failed to offer any information for them.

It gets worse. The frequency-chart says: 'This shows how often all bus routes in

Hampshire operate'. Southampton and Portsmouth are unitary authorities. There is no mention of this on the map, other than a reference to Portsmouth publishing its own, so one can take it this is a map of geographical Hampshire. Except it isn't and what the frequency chart says is wrong. City services in both unitaries are omitted.

Then the cover says something different: 'Almost all public transport in Hampshire appears in this guide'. Such confusion is pitiful. Reading on, it admits some town services are omitted for clarity (though appear on the frequency chart) while those in Southampton and Portsmouth are omitted on both map and chart.

The usual cop-out

Then comes the usual cop-out, that for detail in Southampton one must use separate publicity which is further on detailed as meaning look at First Southampton's and Solent BlueLine's maps. Bus services in Southampton are provided by those two and also by Wilts & Dorset. Even if one knows that and has all three maps one will be no better off, for although quite by coincidence all three operators use Pindar for their maps, each is to a different format, design, layout and scale and it is impossible to correlate them.

One bit of final confusion: the Solent BlueLine map is in a folder with 'Eastleigh Borough Council' on the front, presumably because Southampton City refuses to contribute to this either.

So I suppose the villain of the piece is Southampton City Council, an authority that does not take its duties seriously, but nevertheless as it is in geographical Hampshire this map should at least take pains to explain Southampton's shortcomings, even if the motorist is once again laughing at public transport's incompetence in getting its corporate act together.

Other oddities abound. The county has adopted the 24-hour clock for years, as have all the operators in it. The frequency chart defines the applicable time-bands as 09.00

to 16.20 for daytime, 18.00 to 21.00 for evening (leaving one to hope the remaining peak hours do have a bus service) but when the map lists all 63 railway stations in the county it gives the hours of opening of the 48 staffed booking offices in am/pm. In so doing, it manages to get some quite wrong. Sway, for example, is listed as '6.40-12am'. Is that 18.40 to 24.00? No. It's 06.40 to 12.00. Isn't progress wonderful?

A final inset shows the rail network on its own with connecting ferries and puts Cowes on the wrong bank of the River Medina. As for the phone problem, I've had second thoughts; don't bother to send for this after all.



Top:
Everything is pale green with blue bus routes in Hampshire, while the main map puts Cowes on the west side of the Medina . . .

Above:
. . . and the rail map puts Cowes on the east side.

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BEHIND THE SCENES OF TWO

Almost every month it seems that we read about quality partnerships between local authorities and operators to enhance bus services over selected routes, but what do the words mean? How much behind-the-scenes work goes on to put these plans into action?

A little over a year ago (*Buses* May 1999), I wrote that funding was in place for three more partnerships in Lancashire, one to be rural-based, to build on the experience gained with the first initiative in Blackpool before that authority gained unitary status. Since then, the partnership theme has been underlined by the county council's Provisional Local Transport Plan for 2001/02-2005/06, a hefty five-volume tome prepared ahead of submission of the final plan to the Department of the Environment, Transport & the Regions before the July 2000 deadline and which envisages at least 21 partnership investments rolling out across the county.

While the council's environment directorate put the plan together, employee-owned Preston Bus was addressing ways of stimulating growth by quality partnerships, and post-graduate MSc students from Leeds University became involved in a feasibility study. Most Preston Bus routes are intensive, with eight journeys an hour the norm, but that high level of intensity is matched by a proliferation of bottlenecks. Typical of this is the route out to Gammull Lane on the Longridge Road which appeared ideal for upgrading to persuade car drivers to switch to public transport.

The environment directorate categorised bottlenecks on all the company's routes, resulting instead in the 35 service, with its 33 variant, from the bus station to Ingol and Tanterton towards the north of the borough, being agreed upon as the ideal pilot scheme for the county.

Five partners in Preston

In Preston, there are three additional partners — Preston Borough Council (the county council's statutory highways agent), Lancashire Constabulary (an additional partner brought in during the early stages) and the public itself. The county is using central government funding to provide £750,000 worth of infrastructure improvements, while Preston Borough is

responsible for its maintenance. Preston Bus has spent £900,000 on the outright purchase of the vehicles and on publicity and training.

The Quality Bus Project Group established to oversee the scheme was keen to involve the public from the outset. It distributed 5,000 brochures to all households within the catchment area of the route, explaining the concept, giving details of a series of exhibitions and enclosing a questionnaire. Of the 300 forms returned, 90% were in favour, 6% opposed it and 4% expressed no preference.

When Preston Bus was considering buying low-floor single-deckers for the route, inspectors were posted on each of five demonstrators to canvass passengers views on the relative benefits of a Volvo B10BLE, a DAF SB220, a Dennis/Plaxton Super Pointer Dart, an Optare Excel and a Scania L94/Wright Access Fioline. Drivers provided useful additional feedback on how the demonstrators compared with one another, while passengers tended to compare them with current stock, although one strong message was their popularity with pushchair users.

Vehicle size was the deciding factor, and while single-deckers could have coped with present loadings, the object of the exercise

was to increase them; 'planning to succeed' was the phrase used at Preston Bus. So it became inevitable that double-deckers would be used and, indeed, they are not excessively more expensive than single-deckers. Although not tested, the prototype Volvo B7L, a DAF DB250 and a Dennis Trident were inspected, with the Trident tipping the scales by some distance, resulting in an order for seven with East Lancs Lolyne bodywork — the first new



Right:
Preston Bus Dennis Trident/East Lancs Lolyne 194 (V194 EBV) at the new stop in Friargate, created by closing off the side street to the right of the shelter.

Opposite:
Branding for the Preston Super Route includes stylised maps on the lower panels of the Tridents.
Both PETER HESKETH

QUALITY PARTNERSHIPS



PETER HESKETH lifts the lid on what has been involved in implementing two high profile bus projects in urban and rural Lancashire

vehicles in the company's striking deep blue and cream livery.

They have straight staircases and downstairs seating for 26, leaving plenty of room for luggage and making the prospect of going upstairs — where security is enhanced by closed circuit television monitors — more inviting. To facilitate rapid repairs, they have rubber gasket glazing rather than arguably more attractive bonded glazing. Other features are the standard kneeling facility, manually operated entrance ramps and modular seating; but only one bus has modular seating upstairs, to see how vandal-prone they may be, so traditional seats are fitted upstairs to the rest. That bus also has a tachograph for private hires.

When it came to dealing with bottlenecks on the route, urban clearway orders were granted to prevent the obstruction of bus stops by parked vehicles and new 36m bus boxes were created using red Tetraflex. To back up these measures, traffic management officers from the town's divisional police headquarters advised on the submission of the application for the orders and the divisional commander

allocated resources for a 'zero tolerance' approach from the outset, bolstered by publicity and an intensive, high profile presence by traffic wardens.

Re-engineering the route

Many of the manoeuvrability difficulties at junctions were resolved by realignment; the easing of the left turn into Blackpool Road from Woodplumpton Road on the inward journey simply required a central refuge being moved back, and the right hand lane in Ringway, on the approach to the right turn into Ormskirk Road just before the bus station, was lengthened to allow buses to have a clear, unobstructed run up to the traffic lights.

However, a traffic order was obtained to tackle the problem encountered on the outward journey along Ringway at the junction with Friargate. When turning right, drivers were often confronted by queues of vehicles in Friargate, caused frequently by buses at stops. Now, only buses are permitted to turn right, while — despite protests by some car and taxi drivers — all right turns from Friargate into Ringway have

been banned. Increased reliability is Preston Bus's number one priority and, in the opinion of managing director Peter Bell, the improvements at the junction have been the biggest boost in achieving that aim.

Once the service started, the traffic prohibition at the Ringway/Friargate junction was disregarded by many drivers, but police enforcement has ensured that offenders were issued promptly with fixed penalty tickets.

To overcome the delays caused by buses standing at the first bus stop in Friargate where the pavement is narrow, a separate stop was created for the quality corridor routes by closing off a side street and siting the additional stop in what was the mouth of the junction. Elsewhere, several stops have been re-sited, some to place them closer to shops, others away from private houses whose occupants had never bothered to complain about obvious incursions on privacy, but were identified by the project group. Inevitably, some shopkeepers did not see the value in having stops outside their premises, and a degree of give and take was called for.

Delays created by congestion at traffic lights should be resolved by the buses' Siemens transponders which are designed to hold green lights and change red ones; they are considered to be the key to the whole operation and the purchase of the transponders and associated loops set under the road surface near traffic lights made the largest dent in the budget.

There are no bus lanes in the scheme, at least for the time being. Two short outbound sections were considered for Ringway and Fylde Road, but have been ruled out at this stage as the Ringway section wasn't considered to make the best use of road space while the other was going to conflict with other turning traffic.

Before the service started, the borough council installed attractive new blue steel shelters at most of the aligned-kerb stops to supplement those supplied in recent times by Adshel. Each site was visited by the project group, photographs taken and an appraisal made. The original aim was to eliminate the step up from the kerb into the bus and experiments were carried out at the bottom of Tulketh Brow, using 220mm Charcon kerbs which pull the front wheel into a curved profile. These were rejected as minibuses, which also use the stops, were hitting them; conventional kerbs were used instead, lowered to 150mm. This creates a small step up, but the kneeling facility and ramps should compensate.

The shelters are all illuminated and equipped with seating which, wherever possible, is not cantilevered. Standard at each stop is place identification, a readable timetable, list of fares, route description and contact phone numbers. Preston council continually process cleans, repairs and maintains the infrastructure. Real-time displays were considered, but the partners are waiting for more funding and better technology before going ahead. Considerable work has also been done at the bus station, which is the show-piece of the route. At the relevant bays, automatic doors have replaced the heavy wooden ones which date from when it was built 30 years ago and platforms have been



Similarly, seating and passenger information in the waiting areas has been upgraded.

As the launch day of Friday, 10 December approached, the final vital element of selecting and training staff was fine-tuned, with 16 drivers put through a programme of defensive driving, customer care and disability awareness training.

Publicity for the Super Route 33/35, which started running on 13 December, was to Lancashire's usual high standard with colourful, easily understood timetables, route branding on the buses themselves with stylish linear maps of the route on lower side panels, along with bullet-pointed features displayed behind the cab. Equally impressive is the 'Quality Bus in Preston' leaflet which explains the concept in more detail and incorporates the gold-on-black 'Q' symbol to be carried beside the entrances of all quality partnership vehicles.

Every afternoon, each bus is driven to the parking area across from the departure bays in the bus station where, in full view of customers, it is swept out. Additionally, the directorate will work closely with Preston Bus on examining timings and loadings, as part of the process of monitoring and evaluation, an essential element of this pilot scheme.

The Clitheroe kit

A similar process in Preston has been followed in the Ribble Valley with the first of the three stages in the Quality Rural Bus Partnership planned to serve the associated new interchange at Clitheroe railway station. In this instance, the county council, Ribble Valley Borough Council and Stagecoach Ribble are the partners, in consultation with Waddington and West Bradford Parish Councils and Clitheroe Town Council. Rather than use static venues as in Preston, a mobile exhibition unit instead toured the rural area.

Phase I is the conversion of the clockwise circular C5

route, connecting West Bradford and Waddington with Clitheroe hospital and with trains arriving from Manchester via Blackburn. Unfortunately, only the interchange was ready in March, so an intended May launch was put back until September.

The initiative includes the bold move for Ribble of providing a pair of low-floor midibuses for the service, rather than the previous Stagecoach standard Mercedes-Benz Vario/Alexander combination. It considered the Optare Solo, but plumped instead for Plaxton-bodied Mini Pointer Darts which have already been put to work in the town — one with Ribble, the other with Burnley & Pendle. Ribble has bid for a Countryside Agency 50% grant towards their purchase, a source also tapped to fund the construction of platforms on grass verges at several points where pavements do not exist. This has eliminated the hail-&-ride feature of the C5, as stops are now readily identifiable and, as in Preston, a high standard of infrastructure and customer information forms an important part of things.

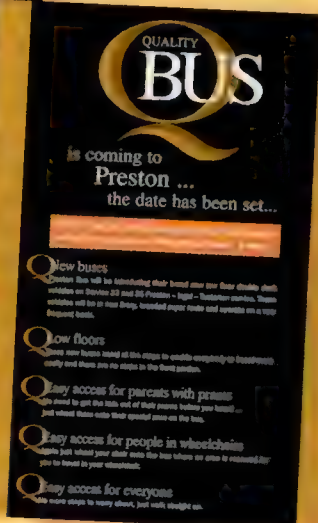
At the directorate's suggestion, new service C15 (anti-clockwise C5) will form Phase II, while the third phase will take the concept deeper into the countryside, to villages like Chatburn, Grindleton and Downham. The latter village, owned by the Assheton family and nestling picturesquely beneath Pendle Hill, could provide a challenge in itself as bus shelters have been forbidden and the old cast-iron phone box has to be painted grey. However, there are plans to use wooden poles and rustic shelters which will blend into the scenery in this beautiful area.

A budget of £273,000 for infrastructure has been drawn up. The county has made five bids for funding within the Rural Challenge Competition and, two of which have secured cash to pay for the interchange and Phase I.

Above:

Stagecoach Burnley & Pendle 701 (W701 BFV), one of the two Clitheroe town service Mini Pointer Darts. Otherwise identical 702 is operated by Ribble. ROY MARSHALL

constructed out on to the concourse.



ST ANDREW'S BACK TO SQUARE ONE

When it opened in April 1957, it seemed like the eighth wonder of the world. After two decades when SMT buses had parked anti-clockwise round St Andrew Square, Edinburgh at last had its own £250,000 bus station. Tucked into the 61,680sqft north-east corner of the same Georgian square, it had 16 stances — Scottish word for stand — spread over five platforms and was designed to handle up to 120 vehicles and 6,000 passengers an hour. Four platforms handled local bus services, though 'local' extended beyond the Lothians and Borders to Blackpool, Carlisle and Dumfries, Stirling, Callander and Crieff.

SMT started acquiring land in 1938 and the last piece of the jigsaw came when the St. Andrew's Cinema conveniently burned down, allowing a fifth platform for longer-distance services and tours. The station opened later than planned because Edinburgh's city fathers insisted that the frontage of the station should fit in with existing buildings in that area. So a slightly ludicrous neo-Georgian colonnade was built.

SMT, by then Scottish Omnibuses, provided most departures, some shared with fellow Scottish Bus Group companies, notably Alexanders to the west and Western SMT to the south-west. Joint workings brought United buses into the station on regular services to Newcastle and Ribble coaches were seen on Lancashire services. Less obvious visitors were SMT-liveried Leylands on the Stark's service to Dunbar. From 1964, frequent services started to Fife via the newly-opened Forth Road Bridge.

Platform A, the largest, was used by the limited stop service to Glasgow, the busy Midlothian services and the Lancashire coaches. Access to platforms B, C and D was by subway. Platform E was a 9,900sqft sloping area with no passenger shelter, but an adjacent lounge for coach passengers.

The station was of an era when buses were no more than 30ft long, but the advent of 36ft single-deckers in the 1960s started to strain the capacity, though not as much as the late-1960s decision to build an office block using the air-space above the open station. This caused chaos during construction; in the long-term, the supports ate into already tight platform space. The need for a fitting frontage was conveniently forgotten and the colonnade disappeared in favour of a bland office block.

St Andrew Square bus station struggled on, but changes as a result of the Scotmap market research exercise, and then the deregulation of the 1980s, convinced

Edinburgh's St Andrew Square bus station closed on 2 July after 43 years. GAVIN BOOTH remembers it in good times and bad

operators to penetrate farther into Edinburgh city centre. With the bus station sited at the east of the commercial and shopping district, many passengers from the south and east were walking or transferring to Lothian buses. Horror of horrors, some services avoided the bus station altogether and others used on-street termini.

Latterly, the bus station, now owned by City of Edinburgh Council, was freshened up with more passenger-friendly departure points for express services, but there was no escaping the fact that it was a down-at-heel and slightly unsavoury facility, unworthy of a capital city with a substantial throughput of tourists.

A few services of First Edinburgh, SMT's present-day successor, to the Borders, West Lothian, Falkirk/Stirling and East Lothian used the station at the end; Stagecoach worked in from Fife, Dundee and the south-west; MacEwans also worked the Dumfries road; FifeFirst worked to Dunfermline and Ballingry and itself survived only a fortnight longer than the bus station.

The express stances were used by Scottish Citylink to Glasgow, Aberdeen, Inverness and Skye, and by National Express to Leeds, Manchester, Wrexham, Bournemouth and Paignton — and of course to London. Ulsterbus worked to Belfast and there were two cut-price operations on Edinburgh-Glasgow — M8 Motorvator and Stagecoach's Scottish Highway Express.

Edinburgh gets a new bus station sometime at the end of 2002, a smaller underground facility roughly on the present site, but part of a major retail development being built around Scotland's first Harvey Nichols fashion store. It seems likely that this will be used mainly by Scottish Citylink and National Express, though an underground station with escalator access will hardly be obvious to visitors.

For at least the next 30 months, buses revert to St Andrew Square itself, where the south side has become bus-only, with a new platform in the centre of the road and also depart from Waterloo Place (the eastern extension of Princes Street) and North St David Street.



Top:
The fading bus station is in evidence in this May 2000 view of Stagecoach Western 141 (ILL 3507), a 1989 Volvo B10M/Plaxton Paramount loading for the 100 service to Dumfries.
pictures by GAVIN BOOTH

Middle:
Vehicles in three liveries sit under the 1970s pillars on Platform D. Nearest the camera is a First Edinburgh Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer on the South Queensferry service; in front is a First Edinburgh Scania L113CRL/Wright Access-ultralow, on the FifeFirst-branded service to Dunfermline and Ballingry; ahead of it is a Stagecoach Fife Volvo B10M/Plaxton Interurban.

Above:
The colonnade on St Andrew Square itself was a token gesture towards Edinburgh's architectural heritage. Leaving the bus station in October 1963 is then-new DD961 (9961 SF), a Daimler Fleetline/Alexander ordered by Baxter's of Airdrie, but which entered service with Scottish Omnibuses. It was the Scottish Bus Group's first Fleetline.

NEW LIFE FOR

The former London Buses L-class of Leyland Olympians was destined — through no fault of its own — to have a chequered history. By London standards, this was a smallish class of 263 buses including three prototypes bought for evaluation in 1984. It was also of historic interest as the last class of double-deckers designed specifically for London Buses.

'Designed specifically' is a relative term. Chassis and basic body structure are essentially identical to thousands of Olympians supplied to the National Bus Company and others. It was not therefore a type like the Routemaster — or even the RT, STL and many before — which were effectively Chiswick Works Specials built by well-known manufacturers to London Transport's own specification. But the L-class was the product of a lot of LT's design work, especially on the interior, and the result is a bus which looks different from a standard Olympian.

Below:

Though intended for services 2/N2 and 249, the refurbished Olympians do sometimes work other routes; L162 (D162 FYM) works the 176 at Waterloo in June.

Below right:

The lower saloon, with new floor and shark's-tooth nosings.

Some London operators ditched their L-class Leyland Olympians, but Arriva London South is refurbishing them for further service.
words and pictures by STEPHEN MORRIS

The class was confined to south and south-east London, and on privatisation it was split between three operating groups. Go-Ahead-owned London Central finished up with just 10 and got rid of them quickly to Rossendale. Selkent, owned by Stagecoach, had 87, of which 21 were cascaded to East Kent and Midland Red, while the rest were sold. However South London was by far the biggest operator of the type and Arriva has 161 on them still in service, including the three prototypes.

Most were built in 1985/86 and are well into middle age. However this is quite a well-specified bus which rides well and has a neat, tidy internal layout with shallow entrance and exit steps and a flat floor throughout the lower saloon. Moreover, it's still a pleasant machine to drive and with Gardner 6LXB engine and well-proven chassis, plus all-aluminium bodywork, it is reliable and relatively inexpensive to run. Thus Arriva is turning its attention on them to keep them in service for another few years.

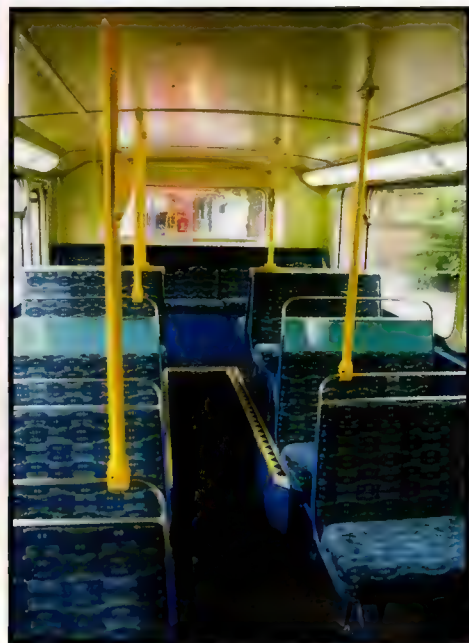
It all depends on tendering

It has started refurbishing 41 of them for services 2/N2 (Marylebone Station-Crystal Palace) and 249 (Crystal Palace-Balham). The future of the others depends on the outcome of tendering; if more routes are retained or won on the basis of refurbished Olympians, then more will be refurbished. The plan is that the buses will then be capable of working for the full term of a five-year contract, and then of being cascaded elsewhere in the group for a further four or five years on lighter duties.

The main shortcomings of the Olympians are their brown, yellow and orange interior décor, which London Transport carried forward from its 1970s designs and in their Leyland Hydracyclic gearboxes which give only 18 months' service between overhauls.

Arriva London North's Enfield accident repair centre has good experience of refurbishing London buses, having undertaken countless refurbishments to enable Metrobuses to continue in service elsewhere in the Arriva fleet (see *Buses* October 1999), not least as open-top conversions for The Original London Sightseeing Tour.

Given the aluminium construction of the Ls' Eastern Coach Works bodies and solidity of the chassis, little structural work is needed and most of the work is cosmetic. Like the Metrobuses before them, old-fashioned and worn London



LONDON OLYMPIANS

Transport-style wooden-slatted lower-deck floors are replaced by more modern, black flooring, while the upstairs floor is sanded and sealed with varnish. Those dingy brown lower interior panels are replaced with Arriva blue, ceilings are repainted and trendy 1970s orange seating is replaced with Arriva's standard bluey-green moquette. All the green handrails — a new feature when the Ls were introduced — are replaced with much brighter and far more visible yellow handrails. Arriva has worked closely with the Royal National Institute for the Blind and is keen to find solutions for blind and partially-sighted passengers.

Where the refurbishment programme departs from that for the Metrobuses is that full-length Transmatic lighting replaces the conventional short exposed tubes, and the transmission is replaced.

Not only does south London suffer the same levels of traffic congestion as the rest of London, it also has the most formidable hills in the capital; some are as testing as you will find in bus operation anywhere in Britain. Voith transmission has worked well in Metrobuses there, in conjunction with the same Gardner 6LXB engine and Arriva has had new D851.2 gearboxes fitted by Voith Engineering in Croydon.

A snug installation

The new transmission is rather larger than the Hydracyclic, but fits snugly (very snugly, indeed) in the offside corner of the engine compartment; it appears that the inner skin of the engine compartment door has had to be removed to fit it.

The latest version of Voith's electronic control is fitted, and this gives a 'neutral

bus stop' facility whereby neutral is selected automatically when the handbrake is applied. This reduces wear and tear and fuel consumption, and it worked extremely well on a brief drive of one of the first buses in the programme, with ultra smooth and instantaneous take-up. Indeed it was so smooth that it took some time to be sure that the system was working, but a barely audible rise in the engine revs a few seconds after applying the handbrake confirmed that it was. The Voith gearbox incorporates a hydrodynamic retarder and this worked extremely effectively in checking the speed of the bus as we drifted down from Crystal Palace towards its home garage at Norwood.

At one time, it looked as if the L-class Olympian could quietly fade away from the London scene, but now some will certainly achieve 20 years' service in London, with more to come elsewhere. The refurbishment makes this an acceptable bus for 21st century travellers, even if it is not quite low floor, and should also reduce running costs.



Below left:

Centre exit; shark's-tooth nosings and yellow handrails throughout.

Left:

Entrance; shark's-tooth nosings and yellow handrails throughout in place of London's pioneering but less visible green.

Below

Cosy installation of the new Voith D851.2 transmission to the offside of the Gardner engine.



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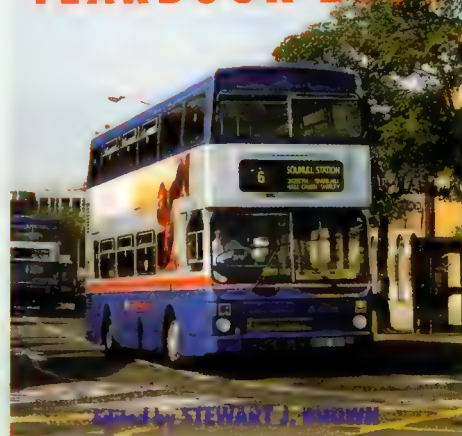


BOOKSHOPS

BuAug/i

It must be August...it's the new Buses Yearbook

BUSES YEARBOOK 2001



Buses Yearbook 2001

Stewart J. Brown

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PUBLISHED AUGUST 2000

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BUSES

SERVICE *Extra*

Arriva North East was very lucky to have my custom on its 93 one Sunday in May. Arriva doesn't appear to have any websites (other than the one telling you how wonderful Arriva is). The most quoted phone number for its North East operations produces a robot directing you to a new number where another robot tells you that the service is not available to people south of the Trent and gives alternatives for national rail and coach but nothing for local bus.

More web surfing uncovers Middlesbrough Council's travel line and it confirms times of buses from Scarborough. When you get to Scarborough there are no bus stops marked '93' anywhere and one relies on taxi drivers or the tourist information office for guidance which is pretty critical as this is not a frequent service. And when the vehicle turns up it's a comfortable single-deck coach. Having been spoilt all day on East Yorkshire Motor Services' coach-seated Olympians, I was disappointed to be denied the pleasure of admiring the fine scenery from a top deck on the last leg.

I was well disposed to EYMS from the outset. It has a splendid website with all the timetable information I needed and some other delights, most noticeably an 'Enthusiast' button which brings up fleet pictures and a complete fleet list with allocations. And the 121, a fine scenic journey north from Hull to Scarborough, is worked with comfortable Alexander Royale Olympians. Its staff, too, were friendly and helpful.

Just before going to Yorkshire, my paper ran a piece about First Leeds sending drivers to charm school to try and counter continuing widespread belief that bus drivers are, in its words, 'grumpy and miserable'. I don't know if this is a purely First Leeds issue (and I doubt that) but none of the drivers I met on my travels across the county needed such training — and that includes, I am happy to confirm, the two drivers of the bashful 93. Some good bus stations in Yorkshire too of which more anon.

When the price can be right

On 1 May, Stagecoach Sussex Coastline had extras running on the 10.05 700 from Brighton to Portsmouth. They weren't completely packed but given that there were eight of them they weren't doing badly. This was a special event marking 25 years of the 700 service with various vintage Class 6-licensed vehicles and the 1970 fares of 80p for a Rover being charged. Like the Heathrow Airports Card (at £30 per month) it proved once again that there is custom waiting to use buses if the price is right.



JULIAN OSBORNE battles with robots and websites as he explores Yorkshire by bus. He also has some thoughts about the speed of buses and other traffic

Unfortunately it often seems that the right price is not an economic one for running the service, although my understanding is that neither of the two cases mentioned above represents a financial disaster even without their other less obviously financial objectives. I suspect that for one-off journeys, people will pay almost anything and regular season ticket travel may be OK, but less regular multi-journey stuff is too expensive for many.

It did seem daft that a couple of chums coming to see me at Heathrow for a meeting, who both work for a bus company, concluded after exploring all the possibilities that driving a car was the cheapest option.

An Irish solution

More news on the 'tickets as change' front. After 30 years of asking why flat fare schemes that issue tickets can't issue tickets as change that can be used on another bus, rather than presented at some office somewhere, I have some interesting news. Aircoach, the new private competition to Dublin Bus on the airport run, is apparently accepting Dublin Bus change receipts for payment and taking bags of them down to the Dublin Bus refund office to turn them into money. Well, it's a start but who will be the first exact money operator to accept change receipts on its own buses?

A question of speed

My position on speed, discussed at length over the years, was called into question again in Yorkshire. Generally I like buses to get a move on but also to have realistic timetables. And when I'm standing waiting for buses, I prefer passing traffic to keep to speed limits for few things are more tedious — and act as yet another disincentive to bus travel — than the constant whoosh of speeding traffic as you wait on a narrow pavement.

I think, therefore, that a speed camera in Gelderd Road in Leeds would keep West Yorkshire police well-funded for years although, and I digress slightly, I was impressed with the emergency stop-inducing pelican crossing. It seemed to be well on the pedestrians' side, unlike the one outside my mother's flat in Worthing which waits until there is no traffic in sight before activating itself — at which point, of course, it's perfectly possible to cross the road without its assistance.

While I like buses to get a move on, I did think that 80 minutes for the 45 miles between the centres of Leeds and Hull, as timetabled on East Yorkshire and Stagecoach's X62, was rather optimistic, even with clear roads. My Stagecoach timing turned straight round in Leeds to leave 15 minutes late, went like the clappers mostly down a deserted M62 and still got to Hull 20 minutes down.

Sightseeing by bus: An East Yorkshire Olympian/Royale on service 121 on the A166 between Nafferton and Bridlington.

JULIAN OSBORNE

YOU WRITE

12 BUSSES
PO BOX 3758
Glasgow G41 1YN
or Fax 0141 427 5994

British trolleybuses? Think light, think Midland Red

Thank you for the superb, well-balanced feature on trolleybuses (*Buses* July). If anything, I am now more anxious than ever to see my concept vehicle become a fully developed, all-British, in-production reality which travels the streets of every major town and city in Britain.

The major bus companies will run a mile rather than contemplate buying and operating a vehicle as revolutionary as mine. I know because I've asked them. Therefore, the only way forward is to 'do a Midland Red', form a company to build and operate them. Imagine the economies of scale.

The oft quoted expense of infrastructure installation can be better seen as an unrivalled opportunity to make money. All that is needed is for a company — either existing or newly founded — to build and operate the overhead and licence it to the bus operator. The electricity could either be bought from a commercial company or generated in-house. Assuming modern overhead equipment is as durable and reliable as the old fashioned stuff, profits should roll in for at least 25 years before significant capital reinvestment becomes necessary.

The argument that trolleybuses consume electricity generated by 'dirty' power stations is a false one. Electricity can be generated by a wide variety of methods, whereas there is only one way to power an internal combustion engine — with irreplaceable fossil fuels.

According to my research and calculations, the average diesel bus is 28% efficient, while a really good trolleybus can be as much as 87% with all factors taken into consideration. The argument should end there, but doesn't because of widespread, ill-founded preconceptions of the trolleybus. The people who take decisions on these matters look at 1940s electrical technology instead of embracing the latest far more efficient methods used to generate power and use it to transport people quickly, cleanly, quietly and reliably. Some of the letters in my files would make a thinking person's eyes water, such is the conservatism, naiveté and backward thinking they display. Even certain senior Labour MPs refuse to accept the existence and benefits of modern trolleybuses.

Without exception, modern trolleybuses are little more than modified motorbuses. While this is understandable from Volvo, Van Hool etc's point of view, it is less tenable when considering the interests of the environment, operators,

passengers and pedestrians. Motorbus chassis/bodies are far too strong to be considered successful trolleybuses. A vehicle half the weight and strength is possible (with all that entails for road damage and passenger capacities — mine seats 100) and in a perfect world could qualify for zero road fund licence fee. Fuel duty rebate would be inapplicable, too.

The arguments against trolley poles and overhead wiring are also a red herring. Take a look at the average street scene: poles and wires as far as the eye can see. Why not consolidate the lot into a single set of sturdy poles which carry traffic information signs, street lights, phone wires, traffic lights and trolleybus overhead? The cost? Perhaps the provider of trolleybus infrastructure could be persuaded to share the poles with local authorities and phone companies etc.

Some insist that trolleybuses are inflexible in operation. So what is the secret of the tram? Or are they magic?

It can be done. If we are to expect a reasonable standard of life at the end of this new century and beyond, it must be done. Now.

John Benton
Moxley, West Midlands

Russia's the biggest and deregulation stopped Bradford revival

Congratulations on publishing such a well-researched and interesting article on trolleybuses, a subject close to my heart.

Unfortunately, you overlooked one vital statistic. The largest systems in the world are not Mexico City (with 513 trolleybuses) and Sao Paulo (with 480); for many decades, the largest has been Moscow (currently with around 1,600), followed by Minsk (1,000) and St Petersburg (900).

There was another factor in the failed attempt to reintroduce trolleybuses to Bradford in the early 1990s. This was that another operator registered a competing service along the proposed trolleybus route, thereby upsetting the delicate financial advantage of trolleybus operation. In the present deregulated environment, it is unlikely therefore that any operator will be prepared to invest in trolleybuses and their associated infrastructure unless the route is protected from predatory competition either by segregation or legislation.

Roland Box
Editor, *Trolleybus Magazine*,
Harpenden

Trolleybuses and British pride

In my younger years, Portsmouth Corporation trolleybus routes 13 and 14 used to pass my front door on a regular basis for many years until our family moved to a new home outside the city boundary in late-1955. That did not stop me riding on them from time to time up until almost the end of trolleybus operation in July 1963. In my opinion, it was a bad mistake doing away with the fume-free trolleybuses, as the speed at which they pulled away from bus stops and on hills had to be seen to be believed.

While staying recently with a friend in the Canadian city of Vancouver, I travelled many times on some of the trolleybuses in service there, as well as other forms of public transport such as the Skytrain and ferry boats, and was very impressed with the ways that the different forms of transport ran with each other — and kept to time. The fares also were cheap which

often meant that some passengers had to stand — and not just in the daily rush hours.

Having seen and sampled travel in both Vancouver and Toronto, it is a real pleasure to be able to ride on systems which the Canadian people can be proud of, and upon returning home to the UK and seeing how it runs services, it makes me sometimes feel ashamed to call myself British.

Many countries around the world use some form of electric public transport, either trolleybuses or trams or even a rapid transit system. There was talk many years ago of a rapid transit system connecting Portsmouth with Gosport and Fareham, but all that has happened is just talk — and this was first mentioned back in the early 1990s. Many people in the area live in hope that one day in the not too distant future they might see a capital 'A' for 'action' instead of another round of red tape.

J. Kinchen
Farlington, Hants



An MAN low-floor articulated trolleybus in the Marketplatz in the Austrian resort town of Innsbruck in April of this year.

MURDOCH CURRIE

London bus driving and bus standards: an Australian perspective

Like Michael Dryhurst ('Hot & Bothered' *Buses* May), I am an ex-Londoner. I worked for London Transport, but now live in Perth in Western Australia. I visit London at least once a year and always feel I am the foreigner or the visitor.

I am glad that Michael has spoken out in this way. I have similar experiences riding buses and not only in London. It is as though passengers do not matter. Fast acceleration, fast cornering and, above all, heavy braking is far too common in British bus travel. Often, just as everyone thinks that the bus is coming to a stand and has stood up ready to alight, there are several sudden heavy brake applications. Do these drivers really get the training in passenger comfort that LT gave at Chiswick? Perhaps we could hear from the companies on this matter.

Modern vehicles accentuate bad driving habits. I am certain that many bus drivers in their minds are driving only the cab and not the rest of the bus. I was trained at Chiswick although I had already passed by PSV test. I can still hear that instructor of 35 years ago saying: 'Don't move off until the vehicle in front moves. Can't you pull up smoother than that? Ease off the brake as you come to rest. That gearchange [it was an RTW] was bloody awful, stop and start off again.' Etc, etc. I think the point is well made.

In Melbourne, Sydney and Perth, I had this training all over again. In Perth, you had to pretend that you were driving a big steel ball around inside the bus, which could roll and crash through the front if you jerked the bus or braked too suddenly. That was in the early 1970s and, as well, the instructors were biased against anyone from LT.

Air conditioning is essential on a vehicle with big windows and few openers. My main gripe

about buses in Scandinavia is that they have no opening windows. In Perth, we have had air coolers since 1975 and 850 Mercedes-Benz O.405s now being delivered will all be air conditioned. Our suburban trains are all air conditioned, as are many British trains, so I join Michael in saying 'Why not British Buses?'.

I come from as hot a climate as he does in California, but find the buses in Britain stifling in the humid summer heat that is now an annual event. It is odd that two ex-patriots who live in warmer climates are complaining about the heat. Britain does not seem geared up for warmer weather.

I have other gripes, too. Missed trips. I have had a particularly bad time with the U1 from Ruislip to Hayes. What makes it worse is that I wrote to First Uxbridge Buses about the poor reliability and received no reply. Another gripe is seat spacing. Those Dennis Darts often have far too many seats for comfort. Michael's point about the body builders riding in their own products probably should be sheeted home to the operators. They specify what they want and in my opinion the bus builders build what is ordered. Again, no apparent concern for passengers.

I am anxious that the industry should do everything to encourage passengers. The sort of things that Michael and I are talking about are not to criticise but to get things to improve. They are what frighten people away from bus travel.

Parking on a bus stop or in a bus lane in Perth is done with acute embarrassment on the part of the motorist. You just do not do it for fear of getting abused by a bus driver or collecting a large fine. In Britain, there is no room for the extreme car culture that pervades. I must say, I thought Australians had a car culture, but they have nothing on you, my former countrymen.

Alan Mortimer
Como, Western Australia

For shell suits and by shell suits

I am delighted that the issue of service quality is being aired openly in *Buses* both through Michael Dryhurst's recent article and the letters column.

Members of the Omnibus Society may recall that I wrote a controversial article in *The Omnibus Magazine* in 1992 which hit hard on the lack of quality in management and the real need to introduce quality vehicles for passengers who, when they boarded a bus, would know that they were about to be made to feel special. On re-reading that article, virtually everything I said then has either come true or is still outstanding, and sadly quality has only had lip service paid to it.

We have to accept the fact that in rural areas the bus can never hope to provide a 'service' but only a social need. In urban areas, and on some inter-urban corridors, a real 'service' can be provided but it will cost money.

Yes, all buses must have air conditioning; there is nothing worse than sitting frying in a stiflingly hot vehicle, especially the upper deck of a bus where the front windows do not open. Yes, all buses must have individual seating with the seats of a width that can comfortably take the average posterior, thereby allowing for the larger ones to be accommodated, too. Yes, there must be more than adequate information about services. Yes, buses must always be reliable and friendly and frequent.

Yet what do we have? Virtually no air conditioning on many new buses — doubtless because of cost. The GRT group pioneered it on ordinary service vehicles in the mid-1990s, but where is it now?

Individual seating? Well, slowly it is coming, but is it enough? I think not. There ought to be

an area of every bus where there are three single seats and two passageways across the vehicle, instead of the present four seats. In simple terms, people do not like sitting beside others and that is distinctly an unattractive alternative to the car. And are manufacturers taking advantage of the new 50cm additional width by fitting wider seats, or is it easier and cheaper to create a wider passageway?

Information? Listen to this. Recently, on visiting the Bus Shop in St Andrew Square in Edinburgh, I found that at least a third of the leaflets were out of stock. On asking at the counter when buses to Pencaitland left I was told to state when I wanted to go and I would be told. What a way to run a business. Yes, there are (now) some times up at the stops, but that is no substitute for an all-embracing timetable that I can put in my pocket and refer to in order to plan a future journey which might involve a break in it.

Heaven knows what I am supposed to do if I want to go on to another route. By definition, am I supposed to seek guidance from Edinburgh before making each journey? What we need are area timetables with every operator's services detailed, but will it happen?

I also had the misfortune a while back to seek out timetables of the Haddington-Gifford Circle service no longer worked by (then) SMT. Unable to help me, I strolled into Lothian Region's all-embracing public transport 'shop' only to be told that the operator of the day did not co-operate with them in providing a timetable. 'But you subsidise them,' says I. I was given the wrong timetable details in an effort to get rid of me, but I steadfastly refused to go and had to point out the route on their map.

I was eventually offered a photocopy of the licence application with the times on it for which I was grateful. On suggesting that rather than just take one copy, perhaps a dozen or so could be run off with spare copies placed on the shelves where they should be, I was told in no uncertain terms that I was lucky to have got what I did and if it had been busy — well, tough luck.

All this leads me to another controversial observation which I shall not flinch in making. The fact is that bus travel is the 'shell suit' of travelling, patronised by 'shell suits' and run by 'shell suits' — and until that latter aspect changes, you will never attract the Marks & Spencers never mind the Laura Ashleys back on to the buses. Money is a large part of the problem, but grass roots quality can only ever be introduced by those who experience it in everyday life; sadly, by and large the bus industry just does not have enough people running it who fall into this category. They may try hard, but their inexperience of life outside the industry does not serve it well.

Harry L. Barker
Tarporey, Cheshire

Don't blame the drivers

In his excellent article, Michael Dryhurst asks: 'Don't they take a pride in doing a job well or is the pay so poor that they simply don't care?'

Until a few months ago, I was a driver with First Edinburgh. It wasn't just poor pay that made me walk away. If the drivers don't care, it's because management doesn't care, either. I have been a professional driver for 48 years. I have driven PSVs, heavy goods vehicles and was an ambulance driver for 16 years. There have been good jobs and bad jobs, but working for FirstGroup has to be the worst job I have ever had and it all stems from the attitude of management.

I worked in Hawick depot in the Scottish Borders. When I first started in 1993, the company was Lowland Omnibuses. In Hawick, we had four Leyland Nationals on town service

and we did main road services to Carlisle and Edinburgh; most of the buses were old, but well maintained and clean. The pay wasn't good, but there was job satisfaction.

Then came FirstBus and the job began a downward spiral. It lost the contract for the Carlisle service to another operator, took work away from Hawick and gave it to another depot. It lost so many passengers that the town service is now operated with Optares. The depot is a disgrace; the roof leaks in rain and the fabric of the building has been allowed to rot, the rest room is filthy, so if you want a clean table to eat your food from, it's a case of DIY. The whole job is just soul destroying.

Today's management is only interested in money. There is no service any more.

There will be no changes until a regulator is appointed to make the companies comply. The bus industry is in the hands of people who don't care about anyone, passengers or staff. I became so disillusioned I just had to walk away.

Michael Dryhurst is right. The staff don't care, but it's not just pay. It's bad management.

W. F. H. Ritchie
Prudhoe, Northumberland

Pay is part of the problem

As I am a bus driver by profession, also an enthusiast, I hope you might be interested in a few thoughts regarding working in the bus industry today.

I am employed by one of the three largest groups in terms of numbers of vehicles operated, from a 60-vehicle depot in Greater Manchester. Forgive me for not being more specific, maybe I'm being slightly paranoid, but I do not relish an invitation to discuss my future with my depot manager should he read this letter.

Staff turnover is fairly rapid, one of the reasons being poor pay of approximately £5.52 an hour which means an average 40-hour week brings in a salary of just under £11,500 per year. We have been offered a tiny pay rise, but this has been rejected by many of my colleagues. Like a number of other bus companies, my employer also has hit upon the wheeze of what is called 'starter rate' which means for the first year new employees are paid roughly £4.75 an hour.

This means that some staff are compelled to work 50-plus hours a week to make ends meet. Despite the fact that this is legal, this means there are a lot of very tired personnel out there which might begin to explain an attitude problem from some of my colleagues.

Add to this mixture poor sick pay, the minimum holiday allowance that the law allows and, to many staff, a management that is perceived as uncaring by many of the workforce, plus petty rules and regulations. A good bus driver must be worth his or her weight in gold and I know quite a few who are really dedicated.

Perhaps I might illustrate what I mean by an uncaring management. Apart from July and August, we are meant to wear ties; then, by special permission, we can take them off. Now this might seem a small point, but any time from roughly May onwards, the weather can get quite warm. True, we have been told we can loosen our ties, but one can still feel sweaty even with this and some of my colleagues have clip-on ties, so there is not much they can do.

None of the buses at our depot has air conditioning. In fact, on some of the Mercedes minibuses it is impossible to turn the cab heater off. I always report this fault, but has anything been done to address this problem? What do you think? To return to the subject of ties, put in this context it must be obvious that this is a safety issue as it's just another distraction which



must mean you are not working at peak efficiency, and being more uncomfortable than you need to be maybe could affect concentration with all that that implies.

Having said that, maybe because I'm an enthusiast, most of the time I enjoy my work, but I only work part time, having changed from full-time earlier this year.

Stephen Carson
Altrincham

Above:
Are loose ties, like the one worn by Robert Carlyle when he played a bus driver in the film *Carla's Song*, better or worse than no ties at all?

Don't blame us all for a few rogues

While Michael Dryhurst's article was both informative and illuminating with respect to its assessment of public transport in London and Paris, there were occasions, however, where it was slightly objectionable in its intonation. Personally, I found some of the references made to be pejorative and unnecessary given the issues which his article raised.

As a bus driver (and regarding myself as a professional in that respect), I personally take offence at Mr Dryhurst's use of the expression 'pay peanuts and get monkeys'. I am sorry that his journeys in London were at the hands of a few rogue drivers, but I do not think that this is an appropriate or typical reflection of bus drivers and the standards that they strive to maintain.

Admittedly, there are those who do take liberties and who do adopt an attitude of ambivalence when driving; however, this is very atypical of most drivers, with the majority attempting to adhere to a good standard of driving.

On the issue of the 'poor standard of bus driving in London' I am at a complete loss. On what evidence does Mr Dryhurst base this statement? Where is the credible evidence that bus driving in London is poor? On the basis of a few cursory journeys within London, can Mr Dryhurst plausibly and unequivocally state that London bus drivers are worse than anywhere else? I think not.

What should be appreciated is that bus driving is an intensely pressurised occupation often tinged with periods of frustration. This is a point which I accept that Michael Dryhurst did recognise. Overall, the vast majority of car drivers have little understanding of or sympathy for bus drivers. On a daily basis, ordinary motorists obstruct bus lanes, park at bus stops, fail to recognise why advanced stop lines exist (or the difficulties faced by bus drivers when negotiating tight left-hand turns into narrow junctions and side roads) or that buses do have priority when pulling into traffic when leaving a stop/stand (Sections 196/7 of the Highway Code). By his own admission, Mr Dryhurst almost certainly wouldn't cope with bus driving today or the frustrating ignorance of car drivers, many of whom view their driving as a competition rather than a skill.

While it is important to have critical appraisal of services and operators, in my opinion this must be balanced and fair. Many operators are actively investing in new fleet and are attempting to meet the requirements of the travelling public.

Yes, of course more can be done and needs to be done, but Michael Dryhurst's article was a systematic deconstruction of the industry which makes a negative impression in improving confidence and the public's perception of the bus industry.

Victor J. Furay
Grangemouth, Stirlingshire

Was this too anti-bus?

In his letter ('You Write' July), Paul Reid's comments just seem anti-bus and even anti-public transport.

It's not the bus companies which choose easy access vehicles, but the Disability Discrimination Act which is to make transport accessible to all and not just able-bodied people.

His comments regarding wages and expensive fares again stink of anti-bus. It was the staff of GM Buses who chose hourly pay as opposed to paid shifts and I don't think £6.70 for seven days' unlimited travel on Stagecoach Manchester which serves where he lives is expensive.

L. Wall
New Moston, Manchester

Why are operators so shy of the web?

In the Horsham district, there are 14 bus operators and in the adjacent district of Mid Sussex there are 11. Only two of those companies, as far as I know, are on the Internet. Of these, only one uses its own name in its url: www.metrobus.co.uk (the uk bit is important; if you omit it you get a Canadian operator).

The other, Brighton & Hove, is a superbly run company, but it arrogantly calls itself www.buses.co.uk on its website. The Stagecoach group has a site that seems to be designed for those who wish to buy shares rather than bus tickets. I can't understand why they are so shy about putting their timetables and maps on the Net.

Nor can I understand why some local authorities produce superbly written paper timetables which go out of date very quickly; one edition of the Crawley book was out of date within a month earlier this year. I don't know what that cost us council taxpayers in the way of printing costs, but nothing went on the web where it is possible to inform travellers when their paper timetables have changed.

West Sussex County Council presumably uses computers in the preparation of timetables; if so, it involves very little extra effort to put them on the web. I'd like to see an internet terminal in every village post office, much like the French Minitel, only better, so that rural residents are properly informed of new services and other changes. It can be done, so why isn't it?

Edgar Locke
Worthing

Exact fares and information: Lothian's answer

I have followed the correspondence in recent issues on the exact fare/fast boarding speed-versus-change-giving/slow boarding argument. At the end of the day, there is no right or wrong answer; both systems have their merits. At Lothian Buses, we believe the best way forward in our area is the exact fare/fast boarding speed

system and, as over 50% of our passengers are non-cash (season tickets etc), that, too, significantly speeds boarding times.

If I may move on to correct some factual inaccuracies in Mr Wragg's letter ('You Write' June), I would advise that it is not City of Edinburgh Council, but rather the individual operators who are responsible for the purchase and erection of timetable cases and provision of information within them.

The present situation in the Edinburgh area reflects Lothian Buses' commitment to provision of timetable cases and information, compared to other operators which have been less keen to spend money on providing roadside information.

I trust the above clarifies the situation.

Neil Renilson
Chief Executive,
Lothian Buses

Excelsior's Belgian DAFs

As usual, I found last month's Fenton File piece one of the most interesting features in *Buses*. However, there are one or two extra points that need mentioning to complete the story of Excelsior's BDN 261.



Excelsior actually had seven Plaxton Supreme-bodied DAF SB2005s (type SB2005DHU605 to be precise) of which two were built to Belgian specification. The sister vehicle to that featured was registered in Belgium as ABA 185 but, unlike BDN 261, returned to the UK and was registered alongside Excelsior's 1983 intake of coaches as BLJ 703Y. This vehicle was identical to BDN 261 and is, I believe, with an operator in Ireland.

Mike is right in saying that the narrowed front end was necessary to meet Belgium's turning circle requirements, this actually having the effect on a number of coach designs, for example the style of the corners of Jonckheere's Bermuda. The Supreme front end, without the usual sidelights/indicators alongside the headlights was also featured on a narrow Leyland Leopard rebodied for Wallace Arnold in 1982 (WUG 153S, *Buses* October 1982, page 465).

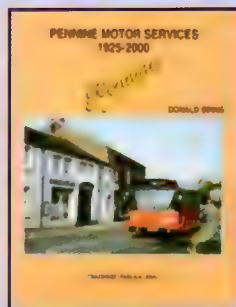
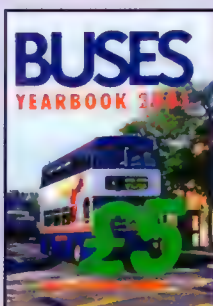
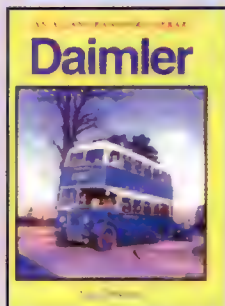
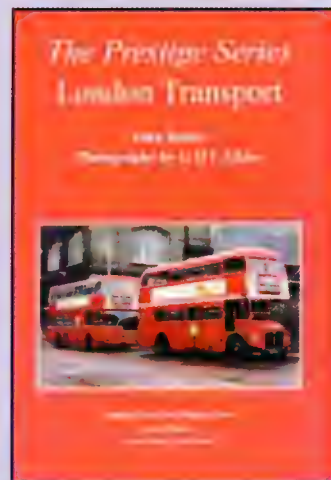
Excelsior's other Supreme-bodied SB2005s were more orthodox, featuring a standard front end. They were registered DJH 475V and VJT 601-4X, DJH being a former DAF demonstrator that had been exhibited at the 1980 Motor Show. Further DAFs followed in 1983 with Plaxton Paramount and Jonckheere Jubilee bodies (including the only two 12m lowheight Jubilees for the UK) but the four that arrived the following year were to be Excelsior's last, the Volvo B10M being the favoured choice from 1985.

James Prince
Creekmoor, Poole

Above:
Excelsior DAF SB2005 VJT 604X reveals the Supreme side glass used in place of the standard rear window on all of these coaches.
JAMES PRINCE

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68 SOLOS, 48 TRIDENTS & ONE TRAM

Nottingham's 21st century profile

England's largest municipal company is shaking off some of its reputation for running non-standard buses, but it's looking forward to the spin-off effect of its new tram line. ALAN MILLAR reports



If you think of Nottingham City Transport, the chances are that you build up a mental picture of uniquely-styled green and cream buses built by a variety of bodybuilders on an equally varied selection of chassis.

It's part of the charm of this 430-vehicle fleet, England's largest council-owned operator and the sole survivor of the 11 municipal undertakings once scattered across the Midlands from Coventry to Lincoln, Chesterfield and Grimsby. But some of that distinctiveness, eccentricity even, is disappearing fast. Nottingham is standardising on two types of bus.

Most will still be green and cream and they will sport a host of features which this innovative operator considers so essential that they've been adopted as standard by their manufacturers, but the days of buying small batches of different types of double-deckers, full-size single-deckers, midibuses and minibuses are over.

For all single-deck work, NCT is buying 9.2m Optare Solos; for double-deck routes, just East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents. Already, there's a mind-boggling total of 68 long-wheelbase Solos — certainly the largest collection of 9.2m models and probably the second-largest Solo fleet after Wilts & Dorset's; and current Trident orders take that model's total in Nottingham up to 48.

Nottingham had a major input into the design of Optare's 9.2m long wheelbase Solo. As well as using them extensively and increasingly in service — this is 293 (T293 BNN) in Huntingdon Street — they are also used for driver training.

MARK LYONS

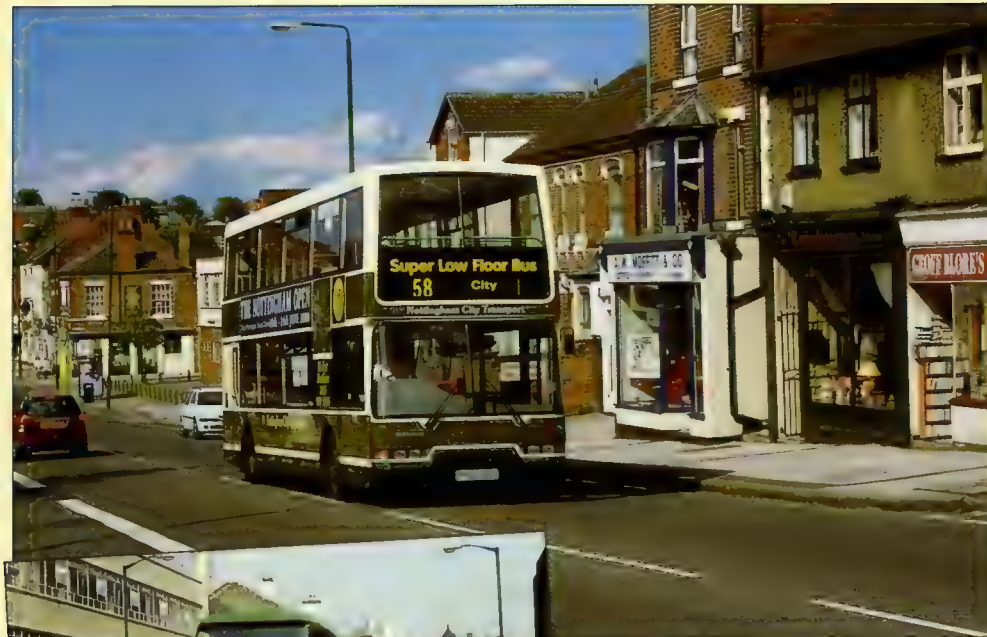
John Pope, NCT's managing director since 1994 and deputy for 11 years before that (his earlier career took him through Maidstone & District, City of Oxford and West Midlands PTE), says the Solo achieves much that larger, more complex and expensive low-floor single-deckers can't. In recent years, Nottingham bought step-entrance Dennis Darts and Volvo B6s and larger Volvo B10B, Scania N113 and L113 single-deckers, before trying low-floor L113s and Optare Excels, but these have become decreasingly attractive.

'We had a number of single-deck routes that replaced 78-seat double-deckers and functioned well with 52-seaters,' says John Pope. 'Then, with the first low-floor buses, they came down to 47 seats and now

new 12m buses have only 40 seats. They don't provide the peak period carrying capacity that we need, they are relatively expensive and also the Solo overcomes a lot of the disadvantages of wheelarch intrusion on low-floor buses.

'That's because one of the things we all overlooked with low-floor buses was that the ambulant disabled and elderly people tend to sit near the doors,' he says. 'We found, with the move from the Scania N-type to the low-floor L-type, that wheelarches and buggy zones were forcing these people farther down the bus when they really want to be able to sit close to the driver and tell him when they need to get off at the next stop.'





Seats to satisfy everybody

In complete contrast, the 9.2m Solo has 33 seats, with conventional seating on the nearside right up to the door and a buggy zone on the offside, so much of the friction between elderly passengers and parents with buggies is eliminated as both groups enjoy priority seating; and because the Solos are cheaper to buy and operate, it's possible to provide a higher frequency service.

'I don't see the larger single-decker having a role for us in future,' says John Pope; indeed, NCT's 13 Volvo B6s have already gone to the Traction Group as they had outlived their usefulness in Nottingham but were attractive to others, and he anticipates selling Leyland Lynxes before the end of the year. 'Gone are the days when you had to keep a bus for life,' he says.

The same thoughtful approach has gone into developing Nottingham's version of the East Lancs-bodied Trident. That's hardly surprising, for the company's long serving engineering director, John Lowrie, was instrumental in drawing up specifications for years which squeezed an above average number of seats into the lower saloons of NCT's double-deckers.

Top:

425 (V325 DRC), one of the fast growing fleet of East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents, heads into the city along Mansfield Road.

ALAN MILLAR

Above:

Typical of the old-style Nottingham standards still in service on underfloor-engined chassis is 301 (B301 KVO), a 1985 East Lancs-bodied Volvo Citybus photographed in 1995.

ALAN MILLAR

On its latest Tridents (with raked-back windscreens to reduce reflections) there are 34 seats downstairs — 19 in the low-floor area — and 53 on top. On these, the layout is the opposite way round from the Solos, with conventional seats on the offside, from directly behind the stairs, and a buggy zone in the nearside. The layout recognises that many elderly people need to travel downstairs, but provides plenty of capacity for peak loads.

It also is an investment for a future in which NCT is optimistic about workplace parking restrictions propelling more commuters on to its buses. 'When those new users come, we've got to have the capacity to carry them,' says John Pope, 'and people in Nottingham expect a seat. It's the culture. That's why we're buying a maximum capacity low-floor bus; a low-floor double-decker is only marginally more expensive than our previous double-deckers — and we don't want to spend £200,000 on a 55-seat articulated single-decker which isn't a realistic alternative at the moment.'

Open to persuasion

He hints that while no other bus offers the Solo's unique advantage of having its front wheels ahead of the entrance, NCT might be open to persuasion to try the other mainstream low-floor double-decker. After all, it was a Volvo customer for years as well as running large numbers of Leylands, so the B7TL ought to have some appeal. 'At the time we wanted a low-floor double-decker, the Trident was the only one available, so I'm not saying we won't buy the B7TL, but the Trident is well established.'

NCT's current suppliers offer some other attractive benefits. 'They all like us placing relatively small orders which help our cash flow and ease our maintenance requirements. Dennis, East Lancs and Optare all are good at dealing with these relatively small volumes,' he explains.

Investment in new buses is a key part of a revolution about to take place in

Nottingham's public transport as the city prepares to reintroduce trams for the first time since the Victorian system was replaced by trolleybuses in 1936.

Then, as John Pope points out with some irony, the public came out on to the streets to cheer the last trams' departure into history. When the 15-mile Nottingham Express Transit between the city centre and Hucknall opens — everyone's hoping that will be in 2002 — there's every chance that their return will be cheered, too.

The tram route extends out into Trent territory, beyond the city on which NCT has concentrated most resources over the past 15 years, and will provide a 12-minute frequency service with 3,000 park-&-ride spaces at strategic points. 'It will appeal to a group of people for whom the bus holds no appeal. The tram has an image of quality that the bus doesn't have today,' says John Pope.

'The bus has advanced technologically more than the tram has since 1936, but the tram has done it on image and maybe because of the predictability of a fixed route system.'

NCT is determined, nevertheless, that its bus service should cash in on the spin-off effect which should come when public transport's image is raised by the introduction of the tram line. That, indeed, is a big reason why NCT is one of the partners in the Arrow Light Rail consortium contracted to design, build and operate the trams for 30 years — and why one of the other consortium members has become a significant minority shareholder in NCT.

John Pope says experience elsewhere showed that it was essential for the success of NET that NCT should work with the tram operator, not in competition with it. 'We took the view that we had to run the tram because a considerable proportion of the trams' patronage would come from bus services and it would only work if it was integrated with the bus network.'

Its quest to put together a consortium began with AdTranz, the DaimlerChrysler-owned train-builder with premises close at hand in Derby; AdTranz had worked in Europe with Transdev, the French public transport operator which subsequently acquired London United Busways and also with Carillon, the construction company which is the other major partner Arrow.

Earlier this year, the relationship was formalised further when Transdev bought an 18% stake in NCT. This isn't the start of any move to privatise the company, but it was necessary to raise the equity the bus company needs to put into Arrow. 'It has been done purely for a public transport project,' explains John Pope. 'It enables us to participate in the tram project without reducing the resources of the bus company.'

That's critical because he believes that, far from abstracting traffic away from buses, the tram line will raise awareness of public transport, demanding better services in the

many parts of the city not likely to see a tram for decades, if at all. The pressure is on NCT to invest in more and better new buses to meet this challenge, and to market all of its routes as part of the tram network.

Getting right to the core

NCT is gearing up for this challenge by adopting the core route approach which FirstGroup and Lothian Buses are also using to generate more ridership on their busiest corridors. As John Pope explains, the object is to provide a simple and more reliable, tram-like service with buses running end-to-end along routes with no intermediate variations.

Starting in stages from August, it will rationalise its network by strengthening services on key radial routes to provide the turn-up-and-go facility which people expect at weekday daytimes and during the morning and evening commuter hours. 'That means we've got to identify the strongest commercial link and sell the service to the public,' he says.

It also means, conversely, that NCT will not be able to meet every travel demand in the city, for the very essence of a core network is that the non-core routes become more marginal. 'We will retain as much of that as we can afford to do,' he says and adds that the company will remain alive to the opportunities created by changes in the city, like the construction of new supermarkets and hospitals.

In some ways, NCT will simply be building on the experience it has gained since October 1985 when it introduced its commercial bus network a full year ahead of deregulation. Then, by ensuring none of its routes went out to tender, it was able to go through the 1986 upheaval with a slogan that this was business as usual. Not only that, but it also increased frequencies in October 1986 and introduced minibuses on new routes penetrating areas between arterial roads that hadn't seen a Nottingham bus before.

Part of this strategy was defensive, to make it less attractive for newcomers to compete on the arterial roads; it also fulfilled a social need and helped develop routes which have since become part of the core network.

For much of the past 15 years, this has spared Nottingham from some of the cut-throat competition seen elsewhere in urban Britain. Today, the principal competitor on arterial routes is Trent/Barton, running from beyond the city and competing mainly on quality; indeed, Trent's fares are generally higher than NCT's.



Above:
The South Notts fleet requires lowheight double-deckers, not because of a low bridge on its routes but because the Gotham depot was built to a low height when there was an offending bridge in the area. Long wheelbase East Lancs-bodied Volvo Olympian 491 (P491 CVO) lays over at Loughborough bus station.
ALAN MILLAR

Below:
One of the most unusual vehicles, even in the context of Nottingham's fleet, is this TBP Freeway II low-entry minibus based on the Peugeot Boxer van and acquired with the Pathfinder business.
ALAN MILLAR





Surprise purchases three years ago were 10 late-model Volvo Citybuses with East Lancs Pioneer bodies and coach seating. This is 337 (R337 RRA).

ALAN MILLAR

As a council-owned company whose core market includes lower income council housing within the city boundaries, NCT prides itself in keeping its fares low. The maximum fares of 80p single from a suburb to the city centre and 90p on cross-city journeys are among the lowest in the country. Again, there has been a defensive motive in doing this, as John Pope admits. 'We tried to keep down outer suburb-to-city fares in the early days to discourage the operation of high-frequency 16-seat minibus services.'

The company suspected that the BET group's United Transport Buses might set up in Nottingham in 1987 with the same sort of minibus service as appeared in Manchester and Preston, but if NCT's fares were low, then a 16-seater wouldn't make money if it competed on price and filled up with city-bound passengers at the first few suburban stops.

Today's fares include a 28-day discount Travelcard for £25 — or 89p per day. 'Again, that's to encourage network travel and it rewards the loyalty of our customers,' says John Pope.

On that knotty topic of exact fares — NCT has had a no-change farebox system since the early days of one-person operation — he admits he thought it might have put the company at a competitive disadvantage with deregulation, but the reverse has been the case. 'It's turned out that one of our best assets is the speed at which we move and leave our competitors to give change to passengers paying with a £5 note.' The imminent introduction of smartcards may remove some of the remaining objections to the no change system.

The rest of the fares scale is simple, with a 45p short hop, an intermediate 60p fare and a 40p flat fare for children. 'We keep an all-silver [coins] scale,' he says, 'and we're watching with interest to see how London's £1 flat fare works.'

The downside of this — and the fact that passenger numbers are static in a city

where the greatest economic growth is in the commuter communities beyond its boundaries — is that NCT's profit margins are low. In 1998, it achieved a 6.6% margin while the big groups today are looking for something closer to 20%.

Of course, it doesn't have institutional shareholders to satisfy and, as John Pope explains, there is a broader objective. 'You've got to understand that NCT is not solely profit-driven. We acknowledge that profit's important and our shareholders like a dividend, but they also expect us to take a wider responsibility.'

That means selling a network of services, while its principal rival has been successful in doing the exact opposite and focusing all its marketing effort on selling travel on individual route corridors. A classic example of NCT's approach has been the identification of missing links to the city's main hospitals and the introduction of services to meet those needs. It has worked with local authorities to develop these and other routes, treating local authority support as a pump priming exercise to help get routes with potential off the ground, rather than seek financial support for routes with no commercial future.

Acquisitions and coaches

While Nottingham may have been spared lasting cut-throat competition and NCT has confined most of its activities to the core market of the city which still owns 82% of the company's equity, it has made a few strategic acquisitions beyond its traditional territory since 1986.

The first was to buy a tendered services and contract operation run by Stevensons of Uttoxeter from a depot in Ilkeston. At the time, NCT was locked in hot competition with Barton (in its last days before being acquired by Trent) and was running out of depot space, so the Ilkeston site's capacity for up to 50 buses was attractive. Erewash Valley Services was

set up to run this operation which later was moved into NCT's Lower Parliament Street depot when the battle with Barton ended.

In March 1991, it acquired the assets and name of the 29-vehicle South Notts Bus Company, based at Gotham (pronounced Goat'am, in case you've always imagined it sounds the same as Batman's home) between Nottingham and Loughborough — the two ends of its main route. The South Notts name and blue livery have been kept — 'We took the view that people were used to the blue and cream buses and saw no reason to change it just because we own it,' says John Pope. While it took the company's services out into Leicestershire, it also strengthened NCT's position in the huge Clifton housing estate served by both operators.

Subsequently, the vehicles of the short-lived Nottingham Omnibus company were taken over when it ceased trading, but NCT's most recent acquisition was of Pathfinder of Newark, which operated minibuses on high frequency routes between Nottingham and Southwell and Newark, in competition with Trent and Road Car.

Pathfinder had been formed out of a longer established business, Worthington's Coaches, and was highly successful in focusing on the needs of its customers and staff to create a highly motivated workforce. NCT acquired a 10% shareholding in Pathfinder in January 1998 and bought the whole company within the first year.

It remains an autonomous unit based in Newark and serving a more prosperous market than other parts of NCT. To maintain this important differential — which also is giving NCT experience of meeting the requirements of its target customers for the tram and improved bus network — it expects to replace the fleet regularly and cascade its buses on to other routes. Indeed, the introduction of 20 Solos into the Pathfinder fleet this year has enabled some Mercedes-Benz minibuses to be moved on to city routes; their white and dark green livery doesn't look greatly out of place in the months before they are repainted.

There also is a small coach fleet, split between quality coaches hired at premium rates and older vehicles (including some of the rare Leyland Lion underfloor-engined double-deckers developed to meet Nottingham's earlier standards) for budget-priced hires.



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PICTURE

The latest restructure of FirstGroup's operations in the West of England has once again separated the Southern National, Badgerline and CityLine fleets into autonomous units. Before this happened, all three groups fell into the First Bristol empire, hence the delivery of Wright Crusader 2-bodied Volvo B6BLEs in the Badgerline series to Southern National's Dorset Transit operation in Weymouth. Here, 1809 (V809 EFB) nears the top of Portland Hill with Weymouth Bay in the background. DWR PICTURE LIBRARY



Below:
FirstGroup recently stated that the average age of its UK bus fleet is eight years. The figure might be lower were it not for First Red Bus's continued operation of 1300 (OCK 997K), a 29-year-old ex-Ribble flat screen Bristol VRT seen at Bideford Quay on 30 April while working a Westward Ho!-Barnstaple journey. This may well be the group's oldest normal service bus outside London. KEVIN LANE



VIEW

Recent developments in Cornwall, Devon, Dorset and Sussex



Left:

In Bournemouth, council-owned Yellow Buses is continuing to operate some of its surviving covered-top Alexander AL-bodied Leyland Fleetlines, including 172 (MFX 172W) seen here in Christchurch, on special services for students.

ALAN MILLAR

Below:

Stagecoach has begun to cascade Selkent's Plaxton Verde-bodied Dennis Lances from south-east London to South Coast Buses. 1201 (L201 YAG), the first to make the journey and have its centre doors replaced by a somewhat obvious new window, was operating at Langley, near Eastbourne when photographed in mid-May.

TERRY S. BLACKMAN

Inset:

One of the most distinctive liveries currently around is that of Cornish independent Western Greyhound of Newquay, seen in Wadebridge on S502 SRL, one of three Plaxton Beaver 2-bodied Mercedes-Benz Varios operated on routes 592 and 594 serving Truro.

MARK BAILEY



Reviews

Most books reviewed in *Buses* are available or may be ordered through the Ian Allan Bookshops at:

45/46 Lower Marsh, Waterloo, London, SE1 7SG
(phone 020 7401 2100);
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BUSES FOCUS 15 ARRIVA PASSENGER SERVICES

IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING. 56pp £3.50

Buses Focus, now published four times a year, has worked its way round the major UK bus operating groups, with Stagecoach, FirstGroup, Go-Ahead and now Arriva.

In terms of size, it may have seemed logical to cover Arriva before Go-Ahead, but Arriva has only recently emerged in something like a mature form. Although enthusiasts mourn the passing of many liveries and famous identities, Arriva has some innovative ideas, and its commitment to quality has started to pay off with real improvements seen on the ground. Even Stephen Morris (joint editor with Gavin Booth) has stopped moaning about his local Arriva service.

With a group of that size it is impossible to cover everything in a 56-page magazine; in addition to some of the Arriva 'corporate issues' it has features on the takeover and integration of MTL into Arriva North West, Arriva Bus & Coach (not actually part of Arriva Passenger Services, but of interest as the only dealer and importer owned by one of the major transport groups), Fox County, the London operations, Arriva Southern Counties, at the way what was United has steadily become 're-United' and there is a brief synopsis of the group's operations in Europe. There's a lot of aquamarine and Cotswold stone in it — the group is committed to having everything in corporate livery by the end of the year — though a few buses in old liveries creep into Tony Moyes's photographic coverage of Arriva Cymru. And as always there are plenty of facts and figures.



Typical of current Arriva operations is The Shires & Essex 5157 (S157 KNK), a route-branded Volvo Olympian/Northern Counties Palatine II, in Thame High Street.
MARK LYONS

CLASSIC BUS YEARBOOK 6

Editor: GAVIN BOOTH. IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING. 240mm x 175mm, 128pp. £13.99

If you fancy a wide variety of totally absorbing nostalgia, then chances are the sixth *Classic Bus Yearbook* is for you. You may argue as to whether every bus in there is a 'classic', but there can be few readers for whom that sobriquet can encompass 1922 Daimler Ys at PMT and 1972 Daimler Fleetlines at Southend, let alone the Bedford SB and the AEC Reliance, two of the longest-running chassis ever, both running through most of the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s.

The Reliance is Alan Millar's *Classic Wonderbus*

(he's allowed to deviate from his *Classic Bus* theme of Blunderbuses once a year), while Geoff Burrows gives a fascinating and detailed account of the SB. And if like me you struggle to remember the differences between your SB3s and SB13s, then, in true Burrows fashion, you need struggle no more.

If it's more subjective stuff that you like, David Lloyd's reminiscences of driving for Eynon's of Trimsaran cannot fail to entertain (though you Bedford fans may turn apoplectic) and Michael Dryhurst explains the rationale for the locations used by the Co-Op for its 'Come Co-Operative Shopping' advertising campaign in the 1960s. You thought these things were a product of scientific market research, when all along it was their assistant director's desire to visit all the remaining British trolleybus systems.

London of course doesn't get forgotten, with a conductor's reminiscences of working from Athol Street garage. The pictures were a particular delight, from Alan Cross in the early-1950s. Today's avid London photographers vie with each other for the ultimate technical perfection; Alan's wouldn't come close to winning but they certainly make up for it in sheer atmosphere.

Heaven may not be at the top of the list of bodybuilders about which you would most like to read, but Martyn Nutland has written a very well-researched, and readable, piece on this less than mainstream builder, whose rip-off of the Burlingham Seagull is little-known and wonderfully audacious. It draws on recollections of Mr Heaven himself, giving the story an excellent human touch, as does Alan Oxley's account of T. H. Barton's remarkable approach to engineering with the famous Nottinghamshire operator that bore his name.

Other features look at Londag, the operator of old British buses in Switzerland, John Aldridge recalls Northern General's efforts to improve on the Leyland National, Geoff Burrows helps you to crack Bristol's codes and the editor recalls Scotland 25 years ago — reminding us how garish some Scottish buses were at the time when England and Wales was all poppy and green, while an illustrated feature on bus and coach advertising gives you the chance to enjoy some prewar liveries in colour.

This one struck me as the best *Classic Bus Yearbook* yet.

STEPHEN MORRIS

BUS REVIEW 15

STEWART J. BROWN, BUS ENTHUSIAST PUBLISHING. 235mm x 165mm, 48pp. £7.50

For Stewart Brown, the highlights of 1999 — the latest year to come in for his excellent round-up of significant British bus happenings — were the increasing variety of London operators, the arrival of low-floor articulated buses, British operators' and manufacturers' forays abroad and especially into North America and the mass of exciting new models unveiled at last year's Coach & Bus show in Birmingham.

Those are the themes upon which he expands throughout this essential reference book. I suppose my enthusiasm for it could be swayed by his generous mention of the 'informed news and views' (his words, not mine) that he credits

Buses with providing around the year and by the fact that 11 of the 82 colour and black and white photographs in the book were supplied by me in an earlier PR life, but that's by the by. If you want to know when Stagecoach bought Coach USA, what's the difference between a Wright Eclipse, Cadet and Solar or who owns MASA, then this will provide the answers you need.

ALAN MILLAR

THE BRITISH BUS ADVERTISING HANDBOOK

DANNY C. Y. CHAN, NORTHCORD TRANSPORT. 210mm x 145mm, 114pp, £14.95

The introduction to this book, by Campbell H. Morrison, explains the purpose of this book more succinctly than I can. It's to inform Hong Kong bus fans about the bus advertising scene in the UK.

To that end, all the text is in Chinese and English, but if your linguistic skills are as Occidental as mine, there's plenty of information and, most important of all, a veritable array of colour photographs of advertising on buses around Britain.

Don't assume that we're just talking about overall advertising liveries or even wrap-around ads and Super Rears. This is a review inspired by Campbell Morrison's recollections of illuminated ads of the mid-1960s which shows every form of advertisement on British buses from small panels to those questionable creations with contrivance windows — there even is a chapter on adverts applied to preserved buses. And if you want to know more about the whole science of bus advertising, take a look at the section analysing how national bus advertising campaigns are organised.

If you think there are too few books devoted to the contemporary scene, then this should go a long way to answering that need.

ALAN MILLAR

THE PRESTIGE SERIES: YORKSHIRE TRACTION

JOHN BANKS and G. H. F. ATKINS, VENTURE PUBLICATIONS. 245mm x 170mm, 64pp, £7.95

This series, based on nine decades of Geoff Atkins's work, has been criticised in the past for its questionable reproduction. This did not escape the publisher's notice and changes have been wrought. The changes are dramatic and now Atkins's evocative views can be seen in all their glory.

The foreword rightly relates that Atkins wanted to 'portray the body builder's art' and therefore many shots are taken in and around bus stations and depots. So what? The glorious results show the evolution of Tracky's main fleet up to the time of the VRT.

In his introduction, John Banks also refers to the process of selection and the difficulty of deciding what to omit. The choice must have been difficult, for there is not a single view which has not earned its place.

This is not a fleet history, though the captions seek to inform. It is, however, a nostalgic reminiscence of gentler days and its cover price for nearly 100 views, some timetable/poster reproductions and a map is exceptional value for money. It has a broad appeal even to those, like me, who believe that the Tilling companies with their Bristol/ECWs really knew the ways of the righteous.

DUNCAN ROBERTS

RAIL VERSUS ROAD IN IRELAND 1900-2000

MICHAEL COLLINS, COLOURPOINT BOOKS, 235mm x 180mm, 192pp, £14.99

This is a singularly comprehensive book, which makes a major contribution to the recorded history of public transport in Ireland. Although the title suggests the traditional rivalry between supporters of train and bus systems, this would be a misunderstanding of the purpose and content which traces the sequence of co-ordination and interaction between train and bus services and the vehicles employed.

Many Irish railway companies, particularly the narrow gauge lines, were built in highly uneconomic rural territory and the book examines the many and varied vehicles the companies developed in their efforts to cut costs and wrest viability against the odds. These ranged from early 'Railmotors' of the BCDR (if you don't recognise these and other initials, this book will complete your transport education!) through the early railbuses of the Great Northern Railway (Ireland) which included road buses remounted on steel wheels, to the varied fleet of diesel railcars developed by the County Donegal Railway, of which the last and best survive on the Isle of Man, and Northern Ireland Railways' 1981 BREL/Leyland National railcar prototype.

The book also traces the long sequence of bus ownership by railway companies, often by acquisition of competitors, including the Londonderry & Lough Swilly which survives still as an independent company, almost 50 years after its last train. Indeed, the history of Ireland's railways is so inextricably interwoven with that of the bus undertakings that this volume is virtually a history of Ireland's public transport.

It was only as I put it down that I realised it excludes some of the pure 'bus' undertakings including, most notably, Ulsterbus between its formation in 1967 and the emergence of Translink as an integrated rail and road system in 1996; this void will be filled by later volumes planned by the publisher. I found only one error — Citybus's Daimler Roadliners were not ex-Barrow, the only previously owned example being ex-Potteries via Coastal Bus Services and Ulsterbus.

This is a most thoroughly researched and authoritative book, liberally and effectively illustrated, which should appeal to all with an interest in transport in Ireland. It also bridges a chasm into which so many other publications have fallen by displaying a bias for one or other mode.

G. IRVINE MILLAR

ABC LONDON'S TRANSPORT NO.2 TRAMS & TROLLEYBUSES

S. L. POOLE, IAN ALLAN PUBLISHING, 115mm x 153mm, 64pp, £4.99

When the original of this facsimile appeared in 1948, it cost two shillings or 10p, whether a 50-fold increase in 52 years reflects inflation we can't tell, but given the going rate for today's equivalent publications this seems good value.

While its original role as a spotters' book would

be impossible to achieve today for all but a handful of preserved vehicles, it provides a fascinating insight into the last years of electric street traction on the streets of the capital. This comes together with the mass of technical information, route and depot details many of us came to appreciate and took for granted in Ian Allan ABCs.

It's interesting to see that, as late as 1948, there seemed little inkling that the trolleybus had a short future ahead of it or that trams would disappear within four years. Such, no doubt, were the shortages of supplies at the time that the author could state confidently that it would be several years before sufficient motorbuses were around to see off the last trams.

ALAN MILLAR

LONDON BUS & TRAM FLEETBOOK 2000

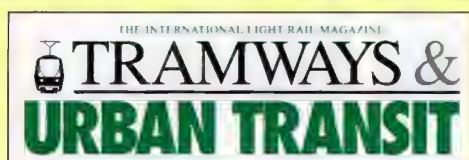
LONDON OMNIBUS TRACTION SOCIETY, 150mm x 147mm, 128pp, £6.00

This month's pair of London bus book reviews includes this, an apt contrast with the 1948 reproduction. LOTS is acknowledged to be the principal source of fleet information on London operators today, and this year's booklet comes with the added delight of CentreWest's Croydon trams.

It's hard to think of anything this book doesn't do. It's modestly priced, it fits into most pockets, the print is clear, there are concise descriptions of 68 operators in London and the Home Counties along with the vehicles they use. In the manner of the later *British Bus Fleets* series of the 1960s and Fleetbooks of the 1970s, pictures (some in colour) are confined to the centre pages and the jacket.

ALAN MILLAR

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NEWLY-RESTORED NEWCOMER SET FOR AUGUST DEBUT

A newly-restored double-decker from a Midlands municipal fleet is set to be one of the stars of the 'Century of British Motorbuses' event at Birmingham's Aston Manor Transport Museum on Saturday 5 August.

Work is scheduled to be completed in time for this bus to make its first appearance painted back in the colours of a local authority whose buses lost their identity the best part of 30 years ago.

The event, organised in conjunction with *Buses and Preserved Bus* will be centred on Aston Manor, a former Birmingham City Transport tram depot and home to a fine collection of Midlands buses, with a connecting bus service to a display of vehicles at Aston Hall. The display will chart the development of the British bus during the 20th century, with buses grouped by decades. There also will be a connecting bus service to and from Birmingham city centre, running half-hourly from Stop H in Hill Street.

FANCY RESCUING A BURLINGHAM PD3?

The current American owner of a former Western SMT Leyland PD3/3 with 'Northern Counties lookalike' Burlingham lowbridge body is seeking a buyer for this now rare beast.

The 1960 67-seater, originally Western D1573, was exported to the United States in 1976 and since has been converted into a mobile home. It ended up in a mini-storage facility in Winters, California — around 25 miles from Sacramento. Its owner has disappeared and has not paid storage charges for some time.

The storage facility wants to get rid of it but is keen that it should go to a good home. Given the potential cost of shipping it back to the UK, he is prepared to sell it for a low price.



The ex-Western SMT Burlingham-bodied PD3 is in need of considerable restoration work but may be the only survivor of this rare batch of vehicles built shortly before Burlingham was acquired by Duple.

MICHAEL DRYHURST

FIRST LYNX INTO PRESERVATION

Another landmark has been reached with what is believed to be the first Leyland Lynx bought for preservation.

D101 NDW, new to Merthyr Tydfil and later operated by Grey-Green, has been acquired by a buyer in Orpington, Kent. Reader D. J. Smith met up with it at the Seaton & District Electric Tramway's sixth annual bus and vintage vehicle rally on 10 June.



Hull 270 is back on show

Kingston-upon-Hull Corporation Transport 270 (TKH 270H) made one of its first rally appearances in June following extensive restoration by owner Nigel Green.

David Longbottom encountered it at the 32nd Hull-Bridlington East Coast Run on 11 June and photographed it alongside the Humberside Transport Centre's 164 (WAT 164), a Weymann-bodied AEC Reliance new in 1957. Both are in the streamlined livery which Hull retained until the delivery of its 1973 Atlanteans.



Bid to return New York Mancunian to Britain

Manchester-based preservationists have made a bid acquire one of the surviving Mancunian-style Leyland Atlanteans built for New York.

The Selneq Preservation Society approached Gray Line Tours in Victoria, British Columbia to see whether the company was prepared to sell one of its four surviving Park Royal-bodied AN68A/2Ls out of a batch of eight supplied to New York's Metropolitan Transportation Authority in 1976 for evaluation alongside articulated single-deckers. Their air conditioned bodies were based on Manchester Corporation's 1968 Mancunian design, but with Titan-style windscreens.

The MTA ceased operating them after four years, after which they went to Gray Line in San Francisco for sightseeing; seven went to the Victoria operation on Vancouver Island in 1989.

The Selneq Preservation Society is interested in adding one to its collection of five 'genuine' Mancunians, but as Gray Line intends running the four survivors for several years, it's only prepared to release one if the group can ship out another AN68 to Canada. The society is already seeking funding of the estimated £5,000 to £6,000 cost of shipping ex-Manchester Daimler Fleetline 4708 (DNF 708C) from the United States.

One of the ex-New York Atlanteans in service with Gray Line, Victoria alongside an ex-Nottingham Atlantean/Northern Counties.

R. GELL



AN ALASKAN LODEKKA

A most unusual Bristol Lodekka FLF which has returned to the active bus world from preservation is this former Bristol Omnibus Company FLF6B (C7145) which now conforms to the hitherto unknown standard of an FLF8C.

The 1964 bus has been in the United States since 1978, passed through various California owners, during which time the BVW engine was replaced by a Cadillac 462-V8 petrol engine. This was the power train when the bus was bought in 1997 by Michael Dryhurst and Wally Mellor. They have since sold it to James Suek of Juneau, Alaska for use on shuttle services between hotels and cruise ships.



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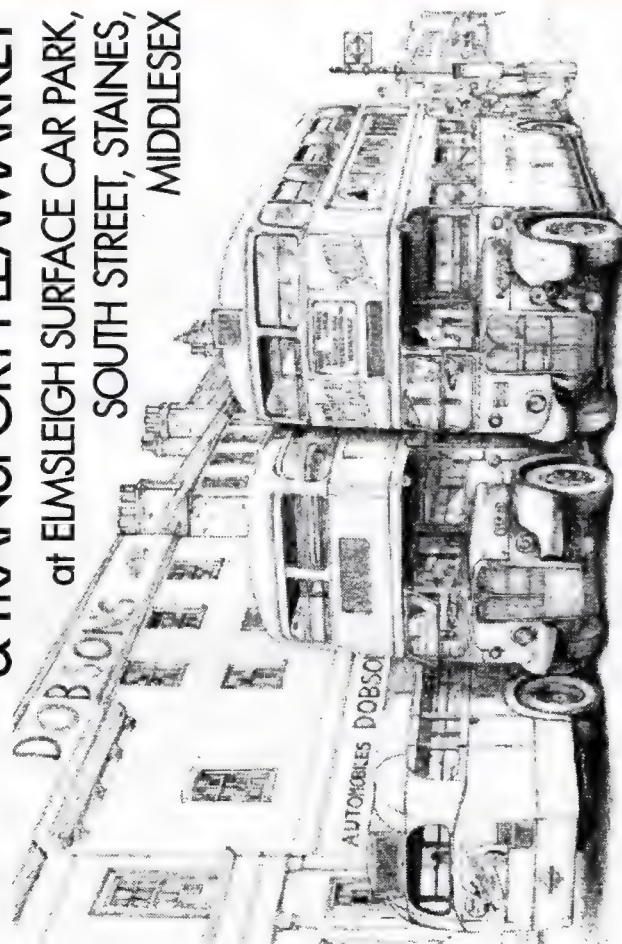
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BUSES ON THE NET

RICHARD DELAHOY explains how the Net can help you plan a visit to a rally or museum

Summer means days out visiting rallies, running days and museums. This year, the traditional *Buses* rally calendar (published with the March issue) has been joined by the new book *Buses Restored*, so how can the Internet help?

One of its advantages is its immediacy, so updated information like changes to opening hours, details of special events and even lists of vehicles entered for rallies can be made available instantly. Some museums also offer a virtual tour showing what's on offer and helping you plan your own visit.

An impressive number of road transport museums is now on line, as is a growing list of rallies. Ideally, a museum site ought to include an overview of the establishment and its aims, how to get there (with map), opening hours, facilities, admission prices, a list of exhibits (with photos), details of special events and a good links page (covering other local non-transport attractions which might help make a family day out, as well as the more obvious bus-related links).

In this connection, I have been impressed by the websites for the Ipswich Transport Museum, the Scottish Vintage Bus Museum at Lathalmond, the National Tramway Museum at Crich, the Lincolnshire Vintage Vehicle Society and the Manchester Museum of Transport — and by the only one I've seen so far that offers directions for those arriving by light aircraft (Sandtoft in case you hadn't guessed).

The Net can also offer the latest news about those museums that are temporarily closed or are under threat of closure and collections that cannot accept public visitors at present; the St Helens Transport Museum, the Keighley Bus Museum and the CPPTD collection in Portsmouth are good examples.

A gigantic leap for Buses surfers

One of the difficulties in finding any of these sites is getting the address exactly right. It's all too easy to make a slip when typing a complicated address like <http://homepages.enterprise.net/skyline/bbpg.html#top> when all you want to do is learn more about the British Bus Preservation Group. The good news is that, from this issue of 'Buses on the Net', surfing will become a lot easier as the Showbus website has agreed to carry a full list of all the sites featured each month.

So all you need to do is add <http://efe.showbus.com/web> to your list of favourites and then click on the links that appear there. Of course, you can still use The Bus Station —

www.annells.demon.co.uk/busstn.htm — where a search facility has recently been added to enable sites to be identified by their content as well as through the geographical listings.

To visit over 40 museums, heritage bus services and rallies that are on line, just visit <http://efe.showbus.com/web>.

I must single out Dick Gilbert's excellent Classic Buses site, to be found via Showbus or directly at <http://homepages.enterprise.net/skyline/buses.html> with its comprehensive events guide, listing of preserved half-cab buses, photo archive and lots more of interest. Meanwhile, to see what a really good rally site ought to look like, try Richard Haughey's guide to the annual Bedford Gathering at <http://www.bg-event.co.uk>.

Among the interesting heritage bus operations on the Net are the fleets of Rexquote, Southcoast Motor Services, Cumbria Classic Coaches and Memory Lane. You'll also find these on our new Showbus page.

Update

Another site devoted to a single manufacturer is by the Foden Society. And if, like me, you are confused by the growing number of news groups to be found at www.egroups.com, help is at hand. Andy Fear has produced a comprehensive listing which even includes an analysis of the volume of messages posted, so you can see whether bread vans or Bristol LHs are more popular.

One that isn't listed there was launched in response to the success of the British Buses Abroad site featured a couple of months ago. This looks at new and old buses of British origin to be found in North America. Where else but the Internet could you expect to see pictures of a brand new Duple Metsec-bodied Dennis Trident in Canada within a few days of being prepared for service?

Your comments on 'Buses on the Net' are always welcome at buses@signal-training.com.

Among the heritage operators to operate its own website is Rexquote which was running NDB 356, its ex-Stockport Crossley-bodied Leyland Tiger Cub, on the vintage service in Weston-super-Mare in mid-May. PAUL CHANCELLOR



Seen the future?

BUSES

www.ianallanpub.co.uk/buses

BuAug/d

LINGFIELD STEAM & COUNTRY SHOW

POND FARM, RAY LANE, LINGFIELD
(OFF A22 AT BLINDLEY HEATH, JUST FOLLOW AA SIGNS)
AUGUST 5th & 6th



ADMISSION: ADULTS £5, CHILDREN & OAPS £3

Why not come to the show by Public Transport!

£1 reduction on admission fees on production of valid travel passes/tickets to Lingfield.

Free Bus Service to & from the event from Connex South Central, Lingfield Station on both days.

Preserved buses etc welcome.

Phone Stuart Boxall on:

020 8777 6128 for details.

All other enquiries phone: 01293 773834

BaMMOT, WYTHALL: RUNNING DAYS

Sunday 6 August

CENTURY OF BIRMINGHAM TRANSPORT

Our annual Birmingham day looks back over the century.

Make a weekend of it!

5 August

Aston Manor Transport Museum

100 years of the British Motorbus.

Bank Holiday Monday 28 August

IT'S BACK AGAIN! 3rd REAR-ENGINEED RALLY

The event dedicated to supporters of rear-engined buses and coaches – entries invited nationally (SAE please).

Sunday 29 October

PRE-HIBERNATION DAY: MIDLAND RED

Back in the calendar – a day dedicated to Midland Red.

Bus rides on each day include route 750 from Hill Street (stop Hh), central Birmingham at 11.30am.

Admission: £3.00 adult; £1.50 senior citizens/children/UB40; £7.00 family (2 adults & 2 children).

Combined admission & all day rides: £6.00 adult; £3.00 senior citizen/child/UB40.

BIRMINGHAM & MIDLAND MUSEUM OF TRANSPORT
Chapel Lane, Wythall, near Birmingham B47 6JX.

Registered
charity no.
507191

ENQUIRIES: ☎ 01564 826471

E-mail: enquiries@bammot.org.uk Web site: www.bammot.org.uk

SPECIAL! Sunday 1 October BMMO D9 Route Tour

5399 revisits former D9 haunts such as Black Country, Kidderminster and 192 route.

Departs Museum 11.00am and Hill Street (stop Hh), Birmingham 11.30am.

£8.00 adult, £4.00 senior citizens/children.

Book through above address – £2.00 deposit, payable to BaMMOT.

Abbott, Leeming, N Yorks

Former Southend Transport Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW H43/31F YUM 515S, latterly with Arriva Kent & Sussex subsidiary New Enterprise is in stock.

Alpha, Hull

New Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers W813-7 UAG are at work on behalf of BAE Systems at its Warton and Salmesbury premises in Lancashire; 814/5 are B29F MPDs, the others are B39F.

Andrews, Tideswell, Derbyshire

Ex Go-North East ECW-bodied JTY 388X and Roe-bodied TPD 128X are the first of several Leyland Olympians purchased for schools contracts.

Plaxton-bodied Scania RBA 480 (G33 HKY) has been re-registered PIL 8578.

Applebys, Conisholme, Lincs

Three Volvo B6BLE/Wright are on order, two for this fleet and one for North Bank Travel in Hull.

An acquisition is of Roe-bodied Leyland Atlantean AUP 365W, but Leyland Fleetline WDA 948T has been withdrawn. Subsidiary company Fleetjet has Leyland Nationals PUK 624R and XOY 760T from Stagecoach Midland Red.

Although the Traffic Commissioner banned Applebys from operating local services in Scarborough for a year, the depot is being retained with 12 vehicles allocated for North Yorkshire private contracts.

Arriva Cymru AA

Nine vehicles acquired in June with the D&G (Brotherton), Rachub business were Leyland Leopard PSU4E/2R/Willowbrook B43F UKG 474S, PSU4E/4R/East Lancs B47F MFV 30/2T, Volvo B10M-46/Plaxton C43F C324 LDT, B10M-60/Van Hool F808 TMD (C52F) and C53F-seated BAZ 7052 (G852 RNC), Mercedes-Benz L608D/Reeve Burgess B20F RDZ 3428 (D39 UAO), L608D/Alexander B20F D219 SKD and Mercedes Vario O.814D/Mellor C33F R962 FYS.

Abermule's ex-Midlands North Leyland Tigers are numbered STL25 (DJN 25X), STL42 (A42 SMA), STL102 (B102 KPF), STL207 (YPJ 207Y) and STL430 (UJN 430Y).

Acquisitions are of former London Country Leyland Olympian ONTL11/2R/Roe H43/29F DOL114 (TPD 114X) from Arriva West Sussex and driver trainer T85 (TPD 106X) from Scotland West which had it cut down after a low-bridge accident in 1997. Also added to stock are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B23F (ex-B21F) MMM766/7 (M466/7 MPM) from Arriva West Sussex, 811D/Beaver B31F MMM881/2 (N781/2 EUA) from Yorkshire, 709D/Reeve Burgess Beaver B25F MMM201-3 (G201-3 RKK) and Vario O.810D/Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F from Kent & Sussex.

Bristol VRT/SL3 DVG532 (DCA 532X) has been sold and just five closed-top VRs remain to represent the Bristol marque — DVG516 at New Quay, DVG517 at Machynlleth and DVG518/22/4 at Aberystwyth. The recent reallocation of Volvo Olympian DUV239 to Dolegallau has caused some interest.

Volvo B10M-61/Duple 340 C51Ft CVV592/3 (HIL 7592/3) have been sold to Davies, Bettws Gwerfil Goch. Mercedes-Benz 709D MMM237 (G237 FJC) has also been withdrawn, but Leyland Lynx SLC67 (F67 FKW) is reinstated.

Other disposals are of Leyland National 2 SNL131 (B131 SED) to Citybus, Liverpool and 709D MMM210 (F210 DCC) to Alpine, Llandudno. Lister, Bolton (dealer) has taken Lynxes SLL31 (D31 RWC), SLC33/5/6 (E33 EVW etc) and SLG254 (E254 TUB).

Arriva Derby AA

New here are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer MPD 2249/51 (W249/51 SNR).

Ex-Arriva Yorkshire Mercedes-Benz Vario O.810/Plaxton Beaver B27F 1172 (R768 DUB) is the only one of its batch allocated here; others are with Fox County depots.

The oldest surviving Fleetline, 4301 (GTO 301V), has completed 20 years' service based at Ascot Drive. The type can still be seen in all-day service, although the Volvo Ailsas are again reported to be threatened with imminent withdrawal.

Arriva East Herts & Essex AA

The delayed new Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander ALX200 mentioned last month, 3461-9/71-9/81, have arrived at Debden for London Transport contracts, allowing temporarily-rented Dennis Darts T73 JBA, V943 DNB and W936/7 JNF to move on to Connex Bus.

MCW Metrobus M290 (BYX 290V) is numbered 5260 rather than 5256 as previously expected.

Mercedes-Benz 811D 2963 (H35 DGD) and Leyland Olympians 5372/10 (TPD 102/10X) have been withdrawn and Dart 3370 (K320 CVX) has been transferred to Southend.

Arriva Fox County AA

232 (F132 FKW) is another Bova Futura FHD12-290/C46Ft transferred from Northumbria.

Some depots' buses have been renumbered relatively slowly into the new scheme, so vehicles have continued to appear with their former fleetnumbers — particularly Mercedes-Benz Varios and 709Ds and most coaches.

Arriva Guildford & West Surrey AA

Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2RH/Plaxton C53F 2174 (YSU 897, A140 EPA) is in stock from Kent & Sussex, all-MCW Metrobus/H43/28D M948 (A948 SUL) for spares from Arriva London.

Dennis Darts DS181/2 (L114/27 YVK) have gone to Kent Thameside, while Mercedes-Benz 811Ds 461/2 (M461/2 JPA) have gone to Kent & Sussex.

Arriva Kent & Sussex AA

Mercedes-Benz 811Ds 1461/2 (M461/2 JPA) are arrivals from Guilford & West Surrey, whilst similar 1444/5 (M444/5 HPF) and Volvo B10M-50 Citybus 7622 (G622 BPH) are receipts from Kent Thameside. Withdrawals are of Mercedes-Benz 609Ds 1075/82 (G75 PKR, G82 SKR), 709Ds 1201-3 (G201-3 RKK) and Leyland Tiger/Plaxton C53F 2174 (YSU 897, A140 EPA). 1075 and Lynxes 3042/63/4 (E886 KYW, G43/5 VME) have passed to Ensign, Purfleet (dealer) along with Leyland National driver trainer YBT407 (YPH 407T), 1082 has become crew ferry bus YFB82 at Sittingbourne and 2174 has gone to West Sussex. Lynx 3065 has not gone to North West, but Citybus 7628 (G628 BPH) has gone to Ripley, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

Further Varios returned to Plaxtons for reworking are 1103/22/3, while 1102/7/12/4/5 (R102 TKO etc) and 709Ds 1201-3 (G201-3 RKK) have gone to Arriva Cymru.

The rear-most pair of upper saloon seats on double-deckers at Tunbridge Wells are being turned to face the rear to deter vandalism.

Arriva Kent Thameside AA

Re-acquisitions are of Dennis Dart 9SDL/Northern Counties B35F 3114/27 (L114/27 YVK) at Northfleet from Guildford & West Surrey.

Arriva London AA

Further orders will take the DLA class of Alexander-bodied DAF DB250s to 276; last of the current batch delivered is DLA189 (W389 VGJ), to H43/21D layout and, following this, conversion of routes W3, 468 and part of 149 will be made by DLA190-223, the balance for the 149 coming from 188 (a tender loss). DLA224-76 is a fresh order to provide 27 vehicles for route 243 at Tottenham and 26 at Croydon for 197/312.

New single-deckers on order are 20 10.6m Dennis Dart SLFs to replace Dennis Lancas on route 289 at Beddington and existing Darts on 173 at Barking. Also, a prototype DAF SB120CS/Wright Cadet is expected at Wood Green and will go on to visit other garages that operate Darts.

Grey Green livery is now no more following repaint of Dart 950.

Unusually, Darts PDL3/15 (V423/35 DGT) have exchanged identities after a vehicle test examiner discovered a hitherto undetected error made at Plaxtons.

MCW Metrobuses M298 and 1442 (BYX 298V, A442 UUV) have been scrapped at Brixton garage. M515 (GYE 515W), M671, 722 (KYV 671V etc), M858/65 (OJD 858/65Y), M950 (A950 SUL), M954 (WLT 954), M959/73 (A959/73 SYF), M1112/6 (B112/6 WUL) and M1354 (C354 BUV) have been transferred to Arriva North East, M682, 729 and 863 (KYV 682, 729X, OJD 863Y) to The Original London Sightseeing Tour with M555, 633 and 799 (GYE 555W, KYV 633, 799X) being open-topped to follow them, M869, 1132 and 1359 (OJD 869Y, B132 WUL, C359 BUV) to Scotland West and M948 (A948 SUL) to Arriva Southern Counties as a source of spares.

Mercedes-Benz 811Ds MD603-7/9 (J603 WHJ etc) have gone to Autosort, Liverpool and Darts DS121/2 (L121/2 YVK) to Arriva North West.

AEC Routemaster RM736 (XYJ 418, WLT 736) has been undergoing refurbishment at Enfield.

Arriva Midlands North AA

Two more Leyland Lynx LX112L10ZR1/B49F transferred from Arriva Yorkshire are 1020/1 (E268/9 WUB).

Body type

A	Articulated
B	Single-deck bus
C	Coach
D	Dual purpose, usually coach seats/bus shell
H	Double-decker
L	Lowbridge double-decker (ie with side sunken gangway upstairs. All other types, with conventional gangways are H [Highbridge] regardless of overall height)
O	Open-top
CO	Convertible open-top

Seating capacity

(For double-deckers this is shown with the upper-deck capacity first, eg 43/30, indicating 43 'over' 30. Where these are not known a total figure is given).

Door position

F	Front
R	Rear
C	Centre
D	Dual doors

When platform doors are fitted where these would not normally figure, usually on rear entrance buses, this is indicated by D after the door position. The letter 'l' after the door indicates the provision of a toilet whilst L after the door position shows that a wheelchair lift is fitted.

Re-registrations

Where a vehicle is re-registered its previous registration numbers follow in italic type, with the most recent given first where it has been registered more than once.

Vehicle reports should be sent to

J. G. Lidstone, 76 Thames Drive, Leigh-on-Sea, Essex SS9 2XD.

Please mark your envelope 'Fleet News'.



Recently delivered Volvo B6BLE/Wright 2221-34 are route-branded for Telford 'Redline' local service 44 (Leegomery-Madeley).

Former Southend Double Dominant-bodied Leyland Tiger coach 1615 (A215 PEV), stripped of its external brightwork and boot but retaining yellow livery, has been resealed to B53F.

Further to last month's 'Fleet News', Mercedes-Benz 709D 292 was not transferred with North West's Winsford depot and several vehicles have been noted in use still with 'Arriva serving Cheshire' logos rather than 'Arriva serving the North Midlands'.

Vehicles withdrawn are Mercedes 709D/Robin Hood B29F 175 (F185 PRE), Renault S56/Northern Counties B23F 330-8 (H330-2, 433, 334-8 DHA), Mercedes 811D/PMT Ami B33F 410/49 (G807 FJX, G399 FSF), Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F 698 (TOF 698S), Leyland Swift/G. C. Smith Whippet B36F 1138 (F907 PFH), Scania K93CRB/Alexander PS B51F 1409/10 (G109 YRE, F110 SRF), Leyland Leopard (TL11)/Duple 320 C53F rebody 1514 (479 BOC, AJA 360L), Leyland Tiger/Duple Laser C50F 1522 (BPR 102Y), Tiger/Laser 2 C55F 1604 (B604 OEH), Bristol VRT/SL36LXB/ECW 1823 (BMA 523W) and 1858/60 (VCA 458/60W) and Mercedes L608D/Alexander driver trainer TV129 (D135 NUJ).

Withdrawn Bristol LH driver trainers TV84/6 (SNU 384R, XPT 686R) are stored at Crewe.

Dealers have bought 330/2/4-8, 765, 1138, 1409, 1514/22, 1604, 1823/58/60, plus already withdrawn 709D 140 (F190 RRF), 160 (F700 LCA) and 189 (H189 EHA), Freight Rover Sherpa 221 (H731 LOL), Nationals 685, 702/19 (TOF 685S etc), 767 (BVP 767V), 866 (TPE 166S) and 876 (GMB 376T), Leopard 1512 (AVT 345S) and Tiger 1635 (A195 KKF).

Arriva North East/Northumbria AA

More all-MCW Metrobuses transferred from Arriva London are GYE 515W, KYV 671V, QJD 858/65Y, A950 SUL, WLT 954 (A954 SYF), A959/73 SYF, B112/6 WUL and C354 BUV.

Ex-London South are DAF SB220LC/Itkarus 480 Citibus B48F J931 CYL, J413/4 NCP and J929/30 CYL are numbered 4085-9.

Durham County Leyland withdrawals are of Tiger 1410 (B110 GRR), National 2 3147 (ARN 895Y), National Greenways 3514/5 (SIB 1284/5) and Olympians 7216/47/67 (WDC 216Y, B247 NVN, C267 XEF). 3514 has gone on loan to the North East driving school at Stockton.

Mercedes-Benz L608Ds 2456/98 (D656/9 CVN), National 2s 3135/8/40/2/7/8 (A135/8/40/2 FDC, ARN 895/6Y) and 3765 (XUA 75X) and Olympian 7207 (SPY 207X) have passed to PVS, Barnsley (dealer); National 2s 3134/7/53 (A134/7 FDC, A543 PCW) went to North East Bus Breakers, Annfield Plain (dealer).

Tees & District has withdrawn Olympian 7206 (SPY 206X) and National 2 3749 (PRA 219X) is another on loan to the Stockton driving school. National 2 3744 (WAO 399Y) passed to PVS and 3758 (CCY 819V) to North East Bus Breakers. Borrowed 1101-3 (R852 YWF, R491 CNF, R436 MTL) have gone.

Teesside Optare MetroRider 2636 has lost its Eston & Normanby Roadranger route-branding, but DAF/Optare Deltas 4006-8 have gained branding for the 'Stockton-Thornaby connection' service 15.

Greenway 3506 (SIB 6706) has passed to Blackburn Transport, 3509/23 (SIB 1279, 6710) to North East Bus Breakers, 3511 (SIB 1281) to Tyne Valley, Acomb (via NEBB), National 2s 3639/40 (RDC 739X, NAT 198V) to Expertpoint, Stratford (via NEBB) and 3752 (DOC 24V) to Ramsay, Clayton-le-Moors.

Internal transfers have seen Durham County Mini Pointer Darts 1717/8 and MetroRider 2601 go to Teesside, National Greenway 3510 and National 2 3768 go to Tees & District, while Teesside MetroRiders 935/6 and Tees & District MetroRider 2642 have gone to Durham County. Teesside MAN/Optare Vecta 1545 has gone to Tees & District and Northumbria DAF/Optare Deltas 261-4/6-9 have gone to Durham County.

Northumbria has had Volvo B6BLE/Wright B40F demonstrator V493 NOH on loan at Jesmond. Withdrawals are of Bristol VRT/SL3s 546/70 (DUP 753S, SGR 795V) and MCW Metroriders 804/14/45 (E804 BTN etc).

PVS of Barnsley (dealer) has taken Leyland Olympian 321 (WDC 212Y), Houston Ramm of Sudden (dealer) taking Metroriders 803/610/2/3/5/7-9/2/3/5/6/9/31/3/40/4 (E803 BTN etc) and 828 (E676 DCU). Bova Futura 132 (K132 FKW) has been transferred to Fox County.

The 2000 edition of the United Enthusiasts Club's illustrated and fully detailed fleetlist book is now available for £2.20 post free from Robert M. Buckley, 23 Briarvale Avenue, Middlesbrough, TS5 7RP and covers Durham County, Teesside and Tees & District. The book includes vehicle allocations — unusually 1999 through to those current in 2000, as well as route-branding, overall and rear-end advertisements.

Arriva North West AA

Further to last month, all Arriva operations in the north-west are now under this title, with 'Arriva serving Merseyside' fleetnames for the former MTL operations and 'Arriva serving the North West' for everything else. More details are in *Buses Focus* 15, on sale now, price £3.50.

Huge service revisions were introduced in Liverpool to integrate former MTL and Arriva North West services, with 120 buses withdrawn as a result. As Gillmoss — home to 75 Titans — is to be sold by the end of the year, by order of the competition minister, and 175 new buses are due over the next two years, all Titans, Atlanteans and Leyland Nationals are to be replaced. 102 Titans and 120 Atlanteans survived the service revisions, though 11 more Atlanteans departed when Heysham Travel was sold to Stagecoach Cumberland at the end of May.

The Titans at Gillmoss are 2044-6/65/70/3, 2101/9/16/22/34/47/54/6/8/9/77, 2211/3/32/4/9/47/55-7/9/69/76/8/84/93, 2304/15/6/37/9/47/51/89/91, 2424/7/30/1/50/63/4/72/83/9/94/9, 2509/20/6/61/99, 2612/28/38/55/6/82/9/8, 2703/26/30/3/46/53/4, 2879/84, while the others are 2338/50/3-5/63/5/74/98, 2400/9/17/43/9/68/91 at Speke and 2121/8/20, 2330/44/76/85, 2570, 2690/5, 2741 at Green Lane. The Atlanteans which survived were 1001-25/30-7/40-51/3-6/70, 1449, 1524/51, 1612, 1898, 1900/3-11/30/1/8/9/45/78/50/3/73-87/9-91.

The PSV Circle reports that Titans withdrawn in April were 2050/8/9/61 (WYV 50T etc), 2073/82/9/97/103/4/6/7/11/5/7/8/24-8/32/3/6/41/4/5/8/9/51/60/5/6/70/4/6/81/2/4/92/4/9/2025/7/10/1/6 (CUV 73V etc), 2228/35/41-3/5/9 (EYE 228V etc), 2258/71 (GYE 258/71W), 2289/91/301/3/7/32/3/42/53/9/64/7/73/82/401/2/5/12-4/6/8/9/21/3/5/33/8/40/50/12/4/30/4/8/47 (KYN 289X etc), 2635/67 (NUW 635/67Y), 2689/72/7/807 (OHV 689Y etc) and 2899 (A899 SYE).

Rapid repainting is being undertaken at Bootle and Southport, as well as by Arriva Yorkshire at Wakefield, but Gilmooss-based Dennis Darts 7601/6 have been painted back into MTL cream/red, having been early repaints into Arriva turquoise.

The Heysham fleet sold to Stagecoach Cumberland comprised Van Hool Alizée-bodied Volvo B10M coaches 0001/2 (OIW 5804, VKB 708), Mercedes 709D/North West B24F 93/4 (H838/9 GLD), Alexander H43/32F-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 1055 (A135 HLV), 1881/2/4-7 (XEM 881W etc), 1932/3/61/5 (ACM 732X etc), Leyland National 2s 5299 (LFR 872X), 6126/8/32 (WWW 909W, VBG 128V, WWW 911W), 6203 (NHH 381W), Leyland Leopard 6927 (GSG 127T) and Leyland Tiger 7012/3/5/20 (CKC 626/4X, EKA 215/20Y), all with Duple Dominant C49F bodies, and B22F Optare MetroRiders 7807-9 (L807-9 TFF).

More ex-Arriva London Dennis Dart 9SDL/Northern Counties B35F are L121/2 YVK; similar L120/5/6 YVK have been numbered 1120/5/6.

Vehicles renumbered to avoid duplication with ex-MTL buses are Leyland Nationals 208/9 (BYW 430/2V) to 6208/9 and Scania L113s 1001-5 (N101 YVU, M2 SLT, N103-5 YVU) to 5321-5.

Re-registered National 436 (THG 242T, AOL 117) has been sold, as have 414/20 (MIL 7614/20). Ex-Nova Scotia Iveco minibuses 27-9 (A268 POW, D25 RPP, E455 TYG), Talbots 30/2/7 (G995 LAH, F448 LBA, H113 YSU), Dodge S56 40 (E790 SJA), National 438 (WJI 6157), and Leyland Fleetlines 472/5/6 (WJI 3502/5, 6156), 478 (RCU 832S) and 480/2 (GAJ 134V, GAJ 137W) have also been sold, 478 via auction to Bigfoot, Leeds.

Further to last month's issue, Mercedes-Benz 709D 152 (N352 BKK) has not been transferred to Midlands North and Leyland Lynx 3065 has not been acquired from Kent & Sussex.

Arriva Southend AA

5434-6 (W434-6 KXX), the first of keenly awaited Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 H51/31F 5434-9/41-3/5-9/51, arrived on 9 June following examples at Luton in The Shires & Essex parent fleet. New features for this fleet are drivers' security screens and electronically-wound indicator blinds — including three-track front, side and rear numeral displays.

Southend's first new double-deckers in Arriva turquoise, they will be route-branded for services 7/8 and 15, and replace 17 Fleetlines. Type training began on 12 June using 5435, with gleaming 5437 on show for a 'Bus Awareness Day' in the High Street on 13 June

Rebodied Daimler Fleetline 5344 (Q554 MEV, GHJ 376L) returned to service in June, using parts from 5340 (MRJ 240W), withdrawn after runaway Dart 3225 (T825 NMJ) struck it in Southend Deeping underpass. Store-shed 5330 (XTE 230V) is still on-site at the new depot.

A Fleetline Farewell Tour operated on 2 July, using oldest survivor 5321 (XTE 221V) and visited Southend Corporation Transport terminals associated with the type.

Another new type introduced here is the National Greenway; 1993-rebuilt 3311 (NIW 6511, LPR 938P) is allocated for driver training in corporate white/grey livery. LDV Convoy/M16 crew shuttle minibuses P698 PRJ has been numbered 1253.

The relatively unusual Leicester Carriage Builders-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds appear destined for a short life here as Herts & Essex step-entrance Dennis Darts are to be transferred in to replace them, first being 9SDL/Plaxton Pointer B35F 3370 (K320 CVX); 9SDL/Wright Handybus B35F 3349/50 (J316/7 VXX) are expected to follow.

Arriva the Shires & Essex AA

Volvo B10BLE/Alexander ALX300 3479 (W479 KXX) has been delivered to Stevenage, while Luton has Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 H51/36F 5421-9/31-3 (W421 KXX etc) which are expected to see off the last 11 remaining Bristol VRs (5000/13/26/33-6/8/46/9 and 5866).

On loan from Arriva, Gomersal (dealer) are DAF MB230/Van Hool C51F 0121/6 (L521/6 EHD) and SB3000/Van Hool C51F 0134 (K534 RUX). In from East Herts & Essex is LDV Convoy/M8L 0365 (P865 VYJ).

Driver trainers Bedford YMT/Plaxton C53F 1147 (YPB 820T), YLQ/Plaxton C45F 1148 (DDX 741T), YMT/Plaxton C53F 1149 (SGS 497W) and YRQ/Duple C36F 1152 (OJN 357P, 9424 RU, MGS 22P) have also been transferred from East Herts & Essex.

Arriva West Sussex AA

Leyland Tiger/Plaxton C53F 2174 (YSU 897, A140 EPA) has been transferred from Kent & Sussex, while Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver 466/7 (M466/7 MPM) have gone to Arriva Cymru.

Arriva Yorkshire AA

In addition to the 20 Volvo B7TL/Plaxton President double-deckers on order ('News' June), six further Plaxton Pointer-bodied Dennis Dart MPDs and seven 12m Wright Eclipse-bodied Volvo B7L single-deckers are expected.

Castleford's MPDs 221/3-7 are route-branded for services 134-137/139 (Castleford-Chequerfield).

Leyland Lynx 2s 342/74 are the latest pair given mid-life refurbishment, while Lynx driver trainer 252 has been repainted in Arriva's corporate white and grey training livery. Fire damaged Lynx 267 (E267 WUB) and Olympian 562 (A562 KWY) have been sold for scrap.

A reduction in the National Express Flightlink requirement for service 240 has led to withdrawal of Van Hool-bodied DAF 32 (R32 JYG).

Further Mercedes-Benz Varios transferred to Cymru are 781/2 (N781/2 EUA).

Arterial Motors, Derby

Former Barton Bedford PTV 598X is being converted into a mobile home outside its owner's house in Glossop Street, Derby.

Ex-Lothian Leyland Atlantean BFS 19L is for sale, stored on behalf of Mutch, Loughborough.

Aston Express, Killamarsh

New Dennis Dart W558 JVV is used regularly on service 99 (Crystal Peaks-Calow).

TM Travel's Leyland National FDV 830V has been on loan.

Dart R529 YRP has been sold, repainted allover white before departure. Plaxton-bodied DAFs D636/8 WNU have passed to Ramm, Sudden (dealer) in part-exchange for a J-registration Optare MetroRider; until it arrived, Autobus-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D L946 JFU was on loan.

Astons, Kempsey

Mercedes-Benz Vano O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B31F S745 RNE has been on loan for service 382 (Pershore-Worcester).

B-Line, Helmsworth, S Yorks

Acquisitions for B-Line are MCW Metrorider MF150/21/DP25F E801 BTN from Northumbria and otherwise unidentified Metrorider/B23F SIL 4385.

BL Travel has Dodge S56/Reeve Burgess B25F D140 RAK from Globe, Barnsley and similar D103 OWG from Road Car.

Bagshaw, New Whittington, Derbyshire

A remarkable survivor here is former Ribble Leyland Titan PD3/5/Metro-Cammell 1793 (RCK 938), still wearing National Bus Company red.

Group codes

AA — Arriva
Passenger Services
BL — Blazefield Holdings
DG — DelGro
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ST — Stagecoach Holdings
YT — Traction Group

FLEET FACT

Southend's missing Essex marks

The introduction of Arriva Southend's Dennis Tridents reminds us that the town's buses will never again be supplied with traditional Essex registration marks. As Southend Corporation, it secured matching fleet and registration numbers from its local registration office until 1972 and the arrival of Fleetlines 374-85 (GHJ 374-85L). Following the switch to the computerised registration system in 1974, the Chelmsford Local Vehicle Licensing Office denied Southend a set of matching numbers the following year for its next batch of Northern Counties-bodied Fleetlines and instead the operator took the unusual step for then (much more common today) of getting the bodybuilder to obtain the necessary registrations locally — hence those buses' traditional Lancashire JTD-P series. Since then, parent companies London & Country (Guildford), London North (Enfield) and now The Shires & Essex (Luton) have all quite literally left their marks on the buses.

Opposite:
One of the most unusual vehicles to be sold recently by Arriva Midlands North's Stevensons of Utoxeter fleet was 1138 (F907 PFH), its Leyland Swift with G. C. Smith Whippet body — a manufacturer better known for welfare buses and mobile libraries. Stevensons' acquired it in 1993 from Gloucestershire County Council.
ALAN MILLAR

Bakewell Coaches, Bakewell

The first new coach for this Derbyshire operator was Ikarus C49Ft-bodied DAF SB3000WS V678 LWT.

Barnet, Hull

Neoplan N122/3/CH57/20Ct E213 BOD has been acquired from McVay, Edinburgh and has been re-registered A19 BLB.

Barnsley & District YT

Leyland National 124 (DET 473V) has been sold for scrap.

Batley & District

Volvo-engined Leyland National 11351A/1R/B48F SGR 559R from Go-North East and National 2 NL106L11/2R/B44F GUW 475W ex-Arriva the Shires were acquired before this South Yorkshire company abruptly ceased trading. Tendered service 239 has been taken up by First Mainline.

Battersby-Silver Grey, Morecambe

The recently delivered Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Paragon, W912 BEC, is in Leger livery. Other new coaches are Scania L941B/Irizar InterCentury W913/4/6/75 BEC, 913/4/75 in Trafalgar colours and 916 in Gullivers livery.

Plaxton-bodied B10M-62 S903 LHG was burnt out recently, but is to be rebodied by Plaxton.

Mercedes-Benz 609Ds E564 VHF and F102 VFV have been re-registered 4148 VZ and 5108 VX respectively. B10M 3812 NF and 5108 VX were re-registered K298 EEC and N281 MRN before being sold.

Bebb, Llantwit Fardre

Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10Ms S67/8 UBO have passed to Volvo Coach Sales, Loughborough (dealer), automatic Setra S250 Specials R42/3 EDW to Evobus, Coventry (dealer).

Blackburn Transport

The end of competition with Northern Blue, Oswaldtwistle has resulted in the acquisition of Gardner-engined National Greenways 521-4 (SIB 6706, 1282/3, 6716, LFR 855X, YPL 439T, BPL 479T, UPE 196M) in exchange for Caetano-bodied Volvo B10M-61s 322/4 (MIB 920, LIJ 749; E841 EUT, F870 TNH).

East Lancs-bodied Leyland Atlantean OBV 162X has been acquired from Preston Bus.

Blackpool Transport

Volkswagen LT55/Optare CityPacer 575 (F575 RCW) is to be repainted in Blackpool cream and green livery for its new owner, Thames Valley Training (which uses this as standard); the CityPacers only ran in HandyBus black/yellow.

Former Fylde Leyland Atlantean 470 (TSD 571S) is now a playbus in Swinton and 482 (HRN 102N) is with A-Jay's Dance Troupe, Bolton.

Atlanteans 348/62 (GHG 348W, A362 HHG) have both suffered accident damage; 362 hit the Winter Gardens canopy.

Driver trainer Atlanteans 322/3 (URN 322/3V) have finally been renumbered 922/3.

Black Prince, Morley

Optare Excel L1150/B42F demonstrator T790 KNW has been on loan.

More ex-Newport Scania to bite the dust are 92/3, S101 (JBO 92W, PTG 93, 101Y). 82 (JBO 82W) and S110 (PTG 110Y) have gone to Wigley, Carlton (dealer).

Bluebird, Middleton

A minor renumbering has seen Iveco 59.12s 4-6 (L4 BLU, M5/6 BLU) become 24-26 and 59.12s 13/4 (N13/4 BLU) have been sold to Bu-Val, Rochdale.

All-MCW Metrobus BYX 138V has been acquired from London United.

Border, Burnley SG

A major fleet reduction has seen the withdrawal of Dennis Darts H105/6/37 MOB, Leyland Leopard LPY 462W, Leyland Fleetline CAU 113T, MCW Metrobuses GOG 241/75W and Leyland Atlanteans NRG 161/5/7M and FVR 257V, with H105/6 MOB and GOG 241W going to MK Metro.

The current fleet now comprises Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 94-9 (G94/6/7 ERP, G98/9 NBD), 175/6 (G575/6 PRM), Metrobuses 207/26/31/6/50/4 (GOG 207/26/31/6W, C950 HWF, C954 LWJ) and Leyland Tigers 413/75/88 (GSU 554, XUX 275Y, AAX 488A).

Bowers, Chapel-en-le-Frith

V110 LVH is one of two new 9.2m Optare Solo/DP29F here.

Former Busways Alexander-bodied Leyland Fleetline OCU 804R is in use as a store.

Camden Coaches, West Kingsdown, Kent

Former London General P401 KAV is the second Marshall Minibus acquired here and similar R114 VLX has gone away for repainting in livery. It's suggested a fleet of up to 10 of these rare midis are due.

Leyland Titans T60, 143 (WYV 60T, CUL 143V) have come from Arriva Scotland West, similar T752, 979 and 1063 (OHV 752Y, A979 SYE, A63 THX) from London Central.

Cardiff Bus

Thirty-five more Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers are on order, 10 of them SPDs and 25 MPDs.

Optare MetroRider 171 (H171 OTG) has been withdrawn.

Recent withdrawals make this fleet possibly unique as all its double-deckers are front-engined Volvo Ailsas — Northern Counties-bodied 401-36, Alexander-bodied 437-48 acquired from MTL and similar 449-56 from Stagecoach Fife. Many have been refurbished with electronic indicator displays.

Details of all Welsh fleets are in the latest British Bus Publishing *Welsh Bus Handbook*, price £15 and available through Ian Allan and other specialist bookshops.

Castleways, Winchcombe, Glos

Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 R936 AMB was on loan here while accident-damaged Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare StarRider J362 BNW was repaired.

Chambers, Bures, Suffolk

Volvo Citybus double-decks F50/1 ACL and G623 OTV, replaced by new Scania N113s, have been snapped up by Plymouth Citybus (q.v.).

Chester City Transport

Ex-Highland Leyland Olympian 15, like similar 14, has had its triangular Scottish Bus Group-style front indicator display replaced by a more conventional unit.

Disposals confirmed are of Leyland Tigers 26-8 (A66/7 KVM, XFM 211) to Jones, Swansea while Dodge 238 (E38 YFM) has gone to Brookside Productions in Liverpool and now features regularly on Channel 4 TV's *Manor Park* in Mersey Mover livery.

Clarkson, South Elmsall, W Yorks

New Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton CheetaH C39F V145 UVY is at work.

Classic, Annfield Plain SG

Dennis Dart 8.5SDL/Duple Dartline DP28F G509 VYE has been acquired from London United and painted in Asda livery for the shuttle to its Gateshead Metro Centre superstore; Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3R/Duple 340 C53Ft G141 NPT (*PIL 2164, G141 NPT*) has been transferred from the Primrose fleet.

Classic, High Wycombe

Former Travel West Midlands MCW Metrobuses LOA 340/BX and GOG 240W are at work in full TWM livery.

Connex Bus, Croydon

DP62/3 (W363 ABD) are Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointers for the Uckfield-Ringmer-Lewes rail-feeder route which started on 5 June.

The vehicles hired briefly to operate service 322, pending delivery of new Alexander-bodied Dart SLFs, were all-over-white 8.8m Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton MPD T73 JBA, V943 DNB and W936 JNF along with Alexander ALX200-bodied W937 JNF; they were previously with Arriva East Herts & Essex.

Country Lion, Northampton

New Mercedes-Benz midicoaches reported here are Vario O.814/Plaxton CheetaH C29F A9 CLN, L7 JSF and L10 NBB, along with O.1120L/Optare Solera C35F L10 NHH and L10 NKK.

Former Cambus Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW VEX 301X and ex-Southampton Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/East Lancs A278 ROW are also in stock.

Crystals, Dartford

New Optare Solos W441/2 CWX are in use on Croydon-area Mobility Bus services in red livery with yellow relief.

Cygnet, Darton, S Yorks

Leyland National 34 (CBV 785S) passed to Abbeyways-Hanson, Halifax.

Dennis, Dukinfield

Two new Dennis Tridents are due imminently, with another pair to follow quickly — all replacing Mercedes-Benz minibuses on service 216 (Manchester-Ashton-under-Lyne).

Dove Valley, Ashbourne

Former Colchester/Arriva Cymru Leyland Lynx E35 EVW is in a grey livery on staff transport duties.

Dunn-Line, Nottingham

The latest vehicle to carry the A5 BOB registration mark is new tri-axle Scania K124LB/Irizar Century C28Ft to high specification with leather seats, lounge, microwave oven and three TV monitors.

The previous A5 BOB (*F701 COA*) has been re-registered and sold.

Also new are Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Excalibur C49Ft W382 PRC in Contiki livery and Mercedes-Benz O.404/Hispano Vita C49Ft W391 PRC.

The Eagre, Morton, Lincs

New here is MAN 18.310/Marcopolo Continental 340 V100 ANN and a recent acquisition is former Stagecoach Ribblesdale National Greenway AFM 1W. Bristol VRT/SL2 HHH 272N has been advertised for sale.

The first new generation Plaxton coach delivered to an English operator was W912 BEC, a Paragon-bodied Volvo B10M for Morecambe-based Battersby-Silver Grey. It is liveried for Leger holidays.
TIM CARTER



EasiRider, Huddersfield

This new operator on Huddersfield-Golcar circulars ('News' May) is using ex-Arriva Cymru Leyland Lynx LX1126TL11ZR1/B49F SIL 7485 (*E328 OMG*) and LX1126LXCTRF1S/B49F SIL 7486 (*E254 TUB*).

East Thames Buses

By June, Optare Excels 322-4/30/2/3/78/9, Volvo Olympians 339/40/2/51/3/4/61 and DAF DB250s 335/82 had been repainted red.

East Yorkshire EY

Expanding on May 'Fleet News', Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Expressliner 38-44 are to C49Ft layout. They are based at Hull (38-41/4) and Scarborough (42/3) and have ousted Van Hool-bodied Scania 67/8, 70/3 (M67/8 LAG, N170-3 AAG).

Ex Go-North East Leyland Olympian/ECW 654 (JTY 372X) has joined similar 655-7 at Scarborough, allowing Bristol VRT/SL3s 725/79/99 (BPT 925S, KTL 29V, JYG 433V) to be delicensed, while VRs 714/8/33/41/93 (XAK 914T, BPT 918S, CPT 733S, DUP 741S, SGR 793V) have been sold. Leyland Leopards 105/8/9 (BUR 443T, GWV 935V, MIJ 999) have also been delicensed.

Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tiger 84 (B263 KPF) has gone into Excel-style livery of cream skirt, burgundy to the bottom of its windows and cream above (as has Mercedes-Benz 811D 437 at Pocklington); this livery is expected to be used on schools and contract coaches, while the cream livery with two burgundy stripes will be retained for charter, holiday and day excursion coaches. AEC Routemaster 817 (LDS 239A) is in full burgundy and cream after languishing for nearly a year at Hull in grey primer.

Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 471 (T471 HNH) was on loan prior to delivery of the four Darts.

Ex-Stagecoach Volvo B10M/Alexander PS 215/6 (M415/6 RRN) have had their dot-matrix indicator displays replaced by electronically-powered roller blinds.

The Mercedes-Benz 811Ds listed as sold last month went to North East Bus Breakers, Anfield Plain (dealer) along with 428/9 (F428/9 GAT), while 425/30 (F425/30 GAT) have passed to Harrison's Coaches, Lancs. 709Ds 438/9 have moved to Bridlington, 440/1/4/5 to Beverley, which also has Vario 451, but 442/3 (F442/3 GAT) were relicensed at Hull after an accident involving new MPD Darts 465/6 (earmarked for service 180) in the depot at Anlaby Road and were covering the MPDs' duties along with Varios 458/9.

Felix, Stanley

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M 709 (W709 PTO) is new and Mercedes-Benz V807 ENN is confirmed in Ilkeston Flyer livery.

First Bradford FG

The 89 new vehicles expected this year as part of FirstGroup's strategy of concentrating investment into key cities, will comprise 45 Volvo B7TL double-deckers (5726-70), 22 Optare Solos (2307-28), 15 more Volvo B10BLEs (1075-89) and seven more articulated B7LAs (1121-7).

Leyland Atlanteans 6322/56 (PUA 322W, VWW 356X) have been withdrawn.

Scania 8446-8 (S446-8 BSG) have been transferred to Leeds.

First Bristol FG

Additional Volvo B6BLE/Wright Crusader 2s reported are 1829/31-4 (W829/31-4 PFB).

Transfers to other group fleets have seen Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare StarRider 3818/21/2 (E818 MOU etc) go to Western National and 709D/Plaxton Beavers 7887/91-6/9 (N887 HWS etc) join similar 7897/8/901-7 with Southern National.

Also sold are ex-Durbin DAF SB2300/Plaxton Paramount C53F 8205 (RJI 2720, A463 HJF) and open-top Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB/ECW 8619/22 (JHU 114F, LEU 263P).

First Calderline FG

Six ex-CentreWest MCW Metrobuses are to be numbered 7607-12, 7607 (GYE 374W) being the first arrival, while ex-Manchester Metrobus ANA 175Y has been acquired for spares.

Meanwhile, Leyland Fleetline 7248 (BVR 70T) has been withdrawn.

First Manchester Volvo B6LE/Wright 6708 (T708 PND) has been in use at Halifax.

Leyland Olympians 5157/63/4/7 have had their twin front destination/via point indicators converted to a single line.

Former Mainline Leyland Atlantean AN68A/1R/Roe H45/29D driver trainer 9115 (XWG 649T) has been acquired.

First Capital FG

New 10.5m Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 H45/24D TAL938/41/3/5/7/9 (W938 ULL etc) and TA950 (W132 VLO) have been delivered, with TAL946/8 used to convey guests to the launch of Tramlink in Croydon.

CentreWest MCW Metrobuses M349, M489 and M943 have been on loan and Dennis Dart 691 (K901 CVW) is back from loan to Connex Bus.

Now withdrawn are MCW Metrobuses 301/15/9/22/33 (GYE 379/55W, KYV 769X, GYE 487W, OJD 843Y), Dennis Dominator 344 (F144 MBC) and Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 567/8 (F247/8 RHK), Metrobus M943 (A943 SUL) did not return to CentreWest but went on to First Huddersfield.

Mercedes-Benz 609D 564 (D764 KWT) has become ancillary vehicle 064.

First CentreWest FG

More 10.5m Dennis Trident/Plaxton President H43/24D are TNL911/4/6/9/20/2/3/5/7/8 (W896, 914/6/9, 897, 922/3, 898, 927/8 VLN) with only TNL921/4/6/9/30 awaited from this batch.

First Capital Metrobuses 325/9/36 (GYE 465W, A898 SUL, OJD 866Y) have been on loan at Orpington.

Metrobuses on the move away are M285 (BYX 285V) to First Edinburgh, M338 and M523 (EYE 338V, GYE 523W) to First Mainline, M374 (GYE 374W) to First Calderline, M393 (GYE 393W) to First Hampshire, M1144/247/421 (B144, 247 WUL, C421 BUV) to First Huddersfield, but M358 (GYE 358W) has gone to PVS, Barnsley (dealer).

First Cymru FG

Volvo B10M-60/Plaxton Expressliner 2 C46Ft K792 OTC has been transferred in from First Wessex, while B10M-61/Jonckheere C51Ft 197 (GSU 388) has gone to Northampton.

Re-registrations have seen DAF MB230 188 (278 TNY, F200 EEP) become F921 FCY, Leyland Tiger 707 (3338 DD) become C658 KEP and Leopard 711 (FEK 1F) revert to its original GCY 124W.

Mercedes-Benz L608D 240 (D240 LCY) has been sold for scrap.

First Hampshire FG

Southampton's 18 Volvo B7LA articulated single-deckers are due in the autumn for service 17 (Woolston-Highfield Estate).

The Volvo B7TL/Alexander ALX400 H49/29F are 801-9/11-6 (W801 EOW etc); there is no 810.

Another ex-CentreWest all-MCW Metrobus is GYE 393W.

Surprisingly, Leyland Atlanteans 229/30 (PBP 229/30S) and 234/8/43 (UPO 234/8/43T) have gone to First Huddersfield.

Further Provincial Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown B44F noted are 373/4/6-9/81 (W373 EOW etc), slightly differing from earlier batches by having three inward-facing tip-up seats in the wheelchair bay and a powered ramp.

Leyland Nationals 331-3 (UFX 847/8S, VFX 980S) have gone to First Red Bus.

First Huddersfield FG

Seven ex-CentreWest MCW Metrobuses are due for the Student Shuttle service to Storthes Hall Park. They are to be converted to single-door, 7613 (B247 WUL) being first recorded with 7614-9 to follow; B144 WUL and C421 BUV are among those six. They were to have been used in London red, but are being refurbished first.

Older, presumably short-term acquisitions are of Leyland Atlantean AN68/1R/East Lancs H45/31F 6469/70 (PBP 229/30S) and AN68A/1R/East Lancs H45/31F 6471-3 (UPO 234/8/43T) from Southampton, used in Southampton red on schools contracts won from 2 May.

FirstGroup float loan vehicle 9813 (N326 NUA), a Volvo B6-50/Alexander Dash B40F, has been operating here in cream with Huddersfield lettering; new to Yorkshire Travel, Dewsbury, it is nominally owned by Mainline.

First Leeds FG

Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton C48Ft 1429 (N600 TCC) has been transferred from Mairs, Aberdeen for a National Express contract.

Ex-Bradford Scania 8446-8 (S446-8 BSG) have been transferred here for Superbus services, newly fitted with guidewheels and entered service without fleetnames. Scania 8140-3 (V140-3 ESC) are branded for service 5A and named *Sammy, Freddie, Susie* and *Willie* respectively.

Volvo B10LA artics 1114/5 have been branded for service 1 (Beeston-Holt Park).

Leyland Atlantean/Roe 6216 (KWY 216V) is back in service.

A notable withdrawal is of Dennis Dart 3239 (M239 VWW), following severe accident damage sustained at the end of January. Time-expired withdrawals are of Leyland Atlantean 6209 (JUM 209V), 6218/9/23/49/50 (KWY 218V etc), 6263 (PUA 263W) and 6330 (VWW 330X). As listed last month under the First Rider Group heading, Leyland Olympians 5513/4 (D513/4 HUB) have gone to Western National.

First Leicester FG

Twelve new Volvo B7TL double-deckers are reported due for service 22 and a batch of 12 Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympians is due from First Glasgow for service 54. First Leeds B7TL W722 CWR was noted at Abbey Park Road for mechanical familiarisation training in mid-May (not used in service). Dennis Trident/East Lancs Lolyne H50/37F demonstrator V701 FFB has also been on loan as part of its national tour.

Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton Paramount 3500 C49F 10 (PSU 626, F996 HGE) is in stock ex-Mairs, Aberdeen, in all-over white.

Dark blue/red-liveried Dennis Dominator 79 (B79 MJF) has had a dark blue 'Barbie'-style willow leaf added to its lower livery, along with route branding for service 26.

A cheap-fares campaign is being promoted by green window posters.

East Lancs-bodied Bristol VRT/LL3 47 (UFW 41W) is confirmed to H50/37F layout; Alexander-bodied VRT/SL3s 48/9 (CNH 48/9T) and East Lancs-bodied 76 (ABD 76X) are now out of use here, 48 having departed. Dominators 46 and 206/50 (TBC 46X, MUT 206W, FUT 250V) have been sold via Mainline for scrap, Renault 776 (G259 LWF) also being out of stock.

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DG	— DelGro
EY	— EYMS Group
FG	— FirstGroup
GA	— Go-Ahead Group
NX	— National Express Group
SG	— Status Bus & Coach Group
ST	— Stagecoach Holdings
YT	— Traction Group



Cardiff Bus 451 (A971 YSX), one of eight ex-Stagecoach Fife Volvo Ailsa/Alexander RV, passes the entrance to the city's central bus station.

JOHN CALLOW

Leyland Tigers 19, 20 (PXI 8935, NTL 655) are withdrawn and awaiting sale and Leyland Leopard 21 (GSO 81V) has departed. Iveco 237 (G737 WJU) is with Tile Hill College, Coventry and all Renault minis are currently out of service, 784 (HDZ 5484) being the last one used, but some may reappear.

First Mainline FG

Former First Leicester Dennis Dominator 2450 (MUT 257W) is a regular on service 25. DDA155/East Lancs H43/33F TBC 46X followed at Rotherham, but has been broken up for spares at Halfway without use. Ex-CentreWest MCW Metrobus DR101/12/MCW H43/34D GYE 362W has also been broken up for spares at Olive Grove.

Ex-Beeline Renault S75s 101-6 have been allocated to Rotherham and upseated to B30F. 110 (M205 VWU) is a former Rider Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B25F.

Renault-Dodge S56 335 (G335 NWB) has been returned to service, while reserve 368/87 (H368/87 UWB) have gone to Red Bus.

Not previously recorded, Volvo B10M-55/Alexander PS 677 (H677 THL) was almost gutted by fire after becoming stranded in unseasonal snow in April.

Dominator 2268 (SDT 268Y) has been withdrawn for disposal.

Redundant stock sold comprises Renault-Dodges 317/20/8 (G317 NWB etc), Leopards 1021 and trainer 9106, MCW Metrobus 1909 and Dominators 2131/49/51/67/242/79, along with Leyland Atlantean trainers 9112/5. 9112 went to First York and the last Atlantean trainer was 9113, now with First Bradford.

First Manchester FG

Further new Mercedes-Benz Citaro O.530/B38F noted are 302/3/6/7/9/11-3/6/26/7 (W302 JND etc).

Optare Solo T789 KNW has been on demonstration in Oldham, Optare Excel demonstrator T790 KNW following it.

Volvo B10BLE 657 (S657 RNA) has been sent to First Bradford.

Vehicles allocated to First Pioneer now carry RE (Rochdale) depot codes.

Ford R1114 driver trainer 1440 (TND 102X) has been sold to PVS, Carlton (dealer) and open-top Leyland Atlantean 4374 (ORJ 374W) for scrap while similar 4551 (ANA 551Y) has been sold for preservation.

First Midland Red FG

Leyland National 756 (AFJ 756T) is reinstated after a long spell of inactivity, but Mercedes-Benz L608D/Reeve Burgess B20F 1478 (C478 BHY) has been withdrawn.

First Northampton FG

Allover white Volvo B10M-61/Jonckheere P599 C49F 9 (GSU 388, E405 RWR) is in stock from First Cymru for the private hire fleet.

First PMT FG

Sensational news is that six three-axle Leyland Olympians are to be acquired from Hong Kong, numbered 694-9 and allocated to Pennine and the Rock Ferry, Wirral base.

New at Newcastle-under-Lyme and expected to be route-branded for Clayton-area services are Optare Solo M850/B27F 73-8 (W473-8 SVT). Further deliveries due are Scania L94UB/Wright Access Fioline 833-8 (W833-8 SVT) and Dennis Dart SLFs 991-5 (W991-5 SVT).

As illustrated last month, Leyland Olympian 759 is in corporate 'Barbie' pastel colours, without the willow leaf logo; might this be the first of many older generation double-deckers to be so treated?

Dennis Lance 1200 (P452 BPH) and Dart SPD demonstrator 1201 (S861 VAT) have both operated service 20 (Hanley-Coppenthall), to cover for modification work being undertaken on PMT's own Lancs.

Leyland Leopard PSU3F/5R/Duple C49F 19 (MDT 238W, PWK 10W) has been acquired from Mainline as a driver trainer, its yellow/red livery coming close to PMT's own colours. From Mairs, Aberdeen comes Scottish Citylink-liveried Volvo B10M-60/Jonckheere C51Ft 46 (G845 GNV, FSU 333, G845 GNV), re-registered 507 EXA, the mark previously carried by Renault Master 29.

Acquired Leyland Lynx 844, based at Adderley Green, is still in Beeline livery.

LPG gas-fuelled DAF SB220GG/Plaxton demonstrator 882 (R28 GNW) has completed its term of trial on Chester park-&-rides and has returned to Arriva, Gomersal (dealer).

Disposals are of Iveco 49.10 105 (J328 RVT), Mercedes-Benz 811Ds 347/8/50 (G347/8, 550 ERF) and 609Ds 477/8 (G477/8 ERF) to Ramn, Sudden (dealer), 106, 333, 521/35/50/1 to Erith Commercial (dealer) and 607 to PVS, Carlton (dealer). Leyland National 298 (GMB 377T) — the last full-sized ex-Crosville single-decker remaining and, after 28 years, the last National — has gone for scrap to PVS after nearly 18 months in store.

First Red Bus FG

More older vehicles cascaded from other group fleets are Leyland National 11351A/1R/B49F UFX 847/8S and VFX 980S from Provincial and Renault S56/Reeve Burgess B21 from Mainline. UFX 848S has been numbered 2811, H387 UWB and already acquired H368 UWB are 9830 and 9829 respectively.

Ford Transits 309 (C871 DYD) and 409/37, 6005/11/3 (C330/58/27/42/4 GFJ) have gone for scrap.

First Southern National FG

Further Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver B22F from First Bristol are 7887/91-6/9 (N887 HWS etc).

First Wessex FG

Volvo B10M/Plaxton Expressliner 6161 (K792 OTC) has gone to First Cymru.

First Western National FG

3818/21/2 (E818 MOU etc), Mercedes-Benz 811D/Optare StarRider (3818 is B31F, 3821/2 DP27F) have been transferred from Badgerline.

Ex-First Leeds Leyland Olympians D513/4 HUB have been numbered 1757/8 and ex-London MCW Metrobuses 9826/7 (JHE 148/50W) have returned off loan to First Southampton.

First York FG

York Pullman's Easylink operations were finally taken over on 16 April, along with Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton B29F 3376-8 (R120-2 FUP), B33F 3379-81 (R130-2 FUP) and 3382 (S140 AGR) whose size and seating capacity have not been reported — plus Leyland Atlantean AN68A/2R/Alexander H49/37F 6466 (AVK 179V) which operates the Tadcaster Grammar School contract.

To operate Pullman's open-top York City Tour Atlantean AN68/1R/Park Royal O43/32F 6467 (WBN 955L) and AN68/1R/Alexander O43/31F 6468 (SWB 287L) have been acquired respectively from First Manchester and Mainline. They wear a special livery of Bradford pale blue between decks and York park-&-ride dark blue below the windows and on upper deck window surrounds, with views of York attractions on both sides. Pullman Atlantean open-topper GAT 201N remains at Elvington pending a decision on whether to keep it.

Other Atlantean acquisitions to bolster double-deck stock are of AN68A/1R/Roe H43/32F 6266 (PUA 266W) from Leeds, AN68C/1R/Roe H43/32F 6354 (VWW 354X) from Bradford, AN68A/1R/Park Royal H43/30F 6460 (VPA 153S) and AN68A/1R/Roe H43/30F 6462 (XPG 201T) from Leeds's Quickstep operation.

Ex-Mainline AN68A/1R/Roe H45/29D driver trainer 9112 (XWG 627T) has been taken into stock, retaining its fleetnumber.

The remaining Leyland Nationals are to be withdrawn this year, probably to be replaced by double-deckers. However, Leyland Leopards 1595/6 (JKW 215/6W) are expected to last another two years.

The fleet is in varied liveries; two-tone green on DAFs 1202/3/8/51-5, Darts 3215-8/32/302/3/5, Olympians 5186/94/5/7 and Atlanteans 6458/63-5; allover green by Nationals 363/8, 1345, Leopards 1595/6, Darts 3207-9/300/4, Olympians 5038/9/188/9 and Atlanteans 6324/57; improved York livery by DAFs 1201/4-7, Nationals 1329/43/8/9/51 and Olympians 5187/96/521; Huddersfield colours by Mercedes minibuses 2221/7-33 and Darts 3206/31/3/49-53/99; Rider with red stripe by Nationals 340, 1321/33/52/4/6; original Rider scheme by Olympian 5193 and Atlantean 6354; park-&-ride blue by Scania 8412-5/9/2103 and white by 8416-8/20; and 'Barbie' livery by Darts 3314/20/1/3/55/6/64-75. There also are overall adverts, trainers and recently-acquired units.

National 2s 333 and 1350 (SWX 533W, UWY 69X) and Atlantean 6336 (VWW 336X) have gone to North, Sherburn-in-Elmet (dealer) for scrap.

Top right:
Ferry passengers
queue to board Go-
Coastline 3744
(B744 GCN), an ECW-
bodied Leyland
Olympian operated on
the dedicated DFDS
Seaways service
between North Shields
and Newcastle city
centre.
THOMAS BRYCELAND

Below right:
First York 6468
(SWB 287L), an
Alexander-bodied
Leyland Atlantean new
to Sheffield
Corporation, has been
transferred from
Mainline to help
operate the open-top
city tours taken over
from York Pullman.
DAVID LONGBOTTOM



Fishwick, Leyland

New here are Van Hool EOS/C47Ft W223/4 CDN, older EOS N662 KCW passing to Stainton, Kendal.

Arriva Bus & Coach (dealer) loaned Northern Counties-bodied DAF SB220 M844 RCP pending delivery in May of Coach & Bus 99 DAF SB120CS/Wright Cadet prototype 1 (L1 JFS).

GHA, Corwen

From Stagecoach has come Mercedes-Benz 811D/Alexander B28F F614 XMS.

Globe/Barnsley Bus Co, Barnsley

Leyland National 2 JCK 851W has been sold to Hodgson, Barnsley.

Go North East GA

The former London Central DAF DB250/Optare Spectras are slowly entering service following refurbishment at First Mainline's Rotherham workshops. Delivered to Go-Northern at Chester-le-Street are 3844/53 (K312/21 KYG) with Go-Northern rather than Go-Xpress fleetnames; 3844 was to have become 3845. 3854/6/7 (K322/4 FYG, K159 PGO) have since followed.

The first five East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents have been downseated from H51/30F to H47/30F to match later deliveries.

Wright-bodied Volvo B10BLEs 4896-900 have been branded for services 765/766 (Durham-Castleside).

Optare Excel 2 demonstrator W438 CWX has been on loan at Percy Main.

Former OK Travel Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 3793/6 (AVK 152/75V) are back in service at Bishop Auckland, sadly sporting Go-Northern fleetnames on their OK colours. Leyland National 2 4667 (UPT 667V) has been reinstated at Chester-le-Street with Go-Northern fleetnames on Northern General red/white.

Coach-seated MCW Metrobus Mk1Is 3781/2/9 (C781 OCN etc) have been withdrawn. Withdrawn vehicles are being stored in a former British Coal compound in the Philadelphia Complex.

Atlantean 3456 (AUP 356W) has gone to West Sussex County Council for schools work, while 3546/68 (MBR 446T, SUP 268V) went to Geldard, Leeds and Booker, Buckinghamshire respectively.

Gretton, Peterborough

Former Leicester Scania-MCW Metropolitans GJF 286, 302N were offered to preservationists, but are apparently now expected to go to the Jesus Army instead. GJF 274N has gone to preservationists to yield spares for ex-Reading Boris 1 (GRX 1N).

Halifax Joint Committee, Halifax

Further MCW Metrobus acquisitions are DR102/22/MCW H43/30F LOA 382/3X from Travel West Midlands.

Halton Transport

Dennis Dart SLF/Alexander ALX200 demonstrator V928 FMS has been on loan. Darts 51 and 66 (H544 FWM, M87 DEW) have been sold.

Hanson, Stourbridge

Mercedes-Benz 709D/Plaxton Beaver M55 BUS is at work.

Harris Bus, Grays

Following abandonment of the Essex local services, Harris Bus MCW Metrorider F310 OVW went to Go Bus, Chesterfield, Town & Country took Mercedes-Benz 709Ds J582/3 WVX and Ikarus-bodied DAFs J51/2 GCX were snapped up by NIBS, Wickford.

Harrogate & District BL

Volvo B6BLE/Wright B37F demonstrator V493 NOH has been on display here.

From Keighley & District comes Mercedes-Benz 711D/Plaxton Beaver B27F L659 MYG as replacement for the last manual-gearbox 709D, 222 (G922 WGS).

709D 219 has been upseated to B25F from B23F. Leyland Tiger 234 has been downseated from C55F to C53F, but 232/3 remain C55F.

Hornsby, Ashby, Lincs

DAF SB220/Ikarus DP42F L512 KJX has been acquired.

Leyland Atlanteans B3/5 (SUA 141R, XFW 983S) and JRC 682V — still in Nottingham livery — are in store.

Hulleys, Baslow, Derbyshire

B47F-seated 14/6 (F730/3 LRG) are the first of three former Go North East Leyland Lynxes expected. They were purchased from Ramm, Sudden (dealer) in part exchange for Leyland Tiger 5 (A53 HRE) and Bedford YNT 9 (D451 CNR). Bedford YNT 7 (E753 HJF) is expected to be replaced by the third Lynx.

Also added is Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton Paramount C49F 5 (B195 CGA).

The last ECW-bodied Leyland Fleetline and final Fleetline built, 20 (SCH 117X), is to be withdrawn shortly, but is destined for the Nottingham Heritage Centre at Ruddington.

Tiger 16 (YPD 112Y) has gone to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

Hunt, Alford, Lincs

Ex-Stagecoach Bluebird Leyland Tiger TRBLXB/2RH/Alexander P B52F A127 GSA is in use in allover white.

Leyland Leopard PNW 308W has been sold, Dennis Falcon TWJ 341Y has gone for scrap and the remaining pair of Falcons, TWJ 340/2Y, passed to Evans, Kinfig Hill.

Huxleys, Thrapwood, Cheshire

The latest Leyland National 2 acquired here is GUW 441W.

Leyland National NOE 553R has received the DAF engine from withdrawn National LIL 4398 which has been cut up on site along with similar Nationals LIL 2258 and written off LIL 4019.

Group codes

AA — Arriva
Passenger
Services
BL — Blazefield
Holdings
DG — DelGro
EY — EYMS
Group
FG — FirstGroup
GA — Go-Ahead
Group
NX — National
Express
Group
SG — Status Bus &
Coach Group
ST — Stagecoach
Holdings
YT — Traction
Group

FLEET IN FOCUS

FLEET:	Gretton's Coaches
BASED:	Thurlaston Close, Peterborough, Cambridgeshire
FOUNDED:	1980 by present-day owner Roger Gretton, a former traffic policeman whose father was an engineering superintendant with Eastern Counties Omnibus Company.
WHAT DOES IT OPERATE?:	Schools contracts, private contracts and private hires, mainly in the UK but occasionally into Europe.
HOW MANY VEHICLES?:	17, ranging from two Bedford YMP/S 35-seaters to two double-deckers — a Leyland Titan and a 74-seat Jonckheere-bodied Scania K112 coach. The current fleet includes 13 Scantias, a type bought since 1986 (including two bought new). Double-deck operation is being scaled down as Peterborough City Council prefers single-deckers with seat belts for contracts to carry younger children.
LIVERY:	Maroon and cream.
MOST UNUSUAL VEHICLES?:	Until recently, Gretton's was one of the last operators of Metropolitans, the 1970s integral double-deckers combining Scania BR111 running units with MCW bodywork. These were first bought around 15 years ago and, thanks to a combination of perseverance, experience and geography, they have worked well on relatively low mileage contracts. The perseverance bit was to rebuild them to eliminate the corrosion which put so many of these buses on to the secondhand market or an early grave; the experience was as a pro-Scania fleet; and the geography was to run them on the flat Fens of East Anglia where they are less likely to consume vast quantities of fuel. Roger Gretton says they were ahead of their time, with light steering, air suspension and easy access to major units.



GJF 302N, one of Gretton's last Metropolitans and one of two ex-Leicester examples run latterly, in Huntingdon bus station in May. It was on a farewell tour of the area organised by the M&D and East Kent Bus Club.

DAVID LONGBOTTOM

Renault S56 and S75

The mini/midibus sold latterly as a Renault — and by far the French manufacturer's most successful bus in the UK — can trace its origins back much earlier than its launch as a volume-selling bus in 1985/86. It is a direct descendant of the Rootes Group's Walk-Thru van which first appeared as a Commer in 1961 and was sold later as a Dodge after Chrysler took over. The Walk-Thru was replaced by the 50-Series in 1979 which, for reasons no doubt well understood within Chrysler, came in various gross weights with an S-prefix; similar logic made the heavier Commando truck (and bus derivatives) a series of G-prefixed models. Chrysler sold all its European businesses to Peugeot in 1978 which, in turn, sold the truck operations to Renault in 1981, but there was an agreement to continue using the Dodge brand name for some years. By the time the 5.6tonne S56-based bus appeared, Renault was phasing out the Dodge name and these tended to be referred to as Renault-Dodges with Dodge names and Renault diamond logos, later just the diamond. The S75, more of a purpose-designed bus based on the 7.5tonne truck, appeared in 1989 and enjoyed initial success with a major order from London Buses. Demand trickled away and the 50-Series was axed when Renault closed its Dunstable factory in 1993.

Isle Coaches, Owston Ferry, Lincs

Leyland Fleetline LMS 153W has been sold to a Worcestershire buyer for conversion into a semi-open-top mobile recording studio.

Jason's Tours, Cranford

Relatively rare CVE Omni H220 BKM is operating Buckinghamshire County Council route 40 to Wexham Park Hospital near Slough, replacing seven-seat Iveco H813 DNX.

Johnson Bros., Hodthorpe, Notts

Volvo B10M B10M-62s L82/4 YBB have been re-registered K1 JBT and JBT 3S respectively.

Redfern, Mansfield ECW-bodied Fleetline GWA 818N has been sold for preservation (kept at Barrow Hill diesel depot by the owners of ex-Darwen Morris Dancers GWA 836N), while Northern Counties-bodied JVM 993N and XRR 289S and Van Hool integral YSV 604 (*B451 KTV*) have been withdrawn.

Bristol VR MIW 2422 (*VHB 679S*) is the first of several repainted in Redfern livery.

Keighley & District BL

Mercedes-Benz 711D 108 (L659 MYG) has gone to Harrogate & District. Leyland Olympian 351 (DWW 926Y), back from Huntingdon & District, is being cannibalised.

Kettlewell, Relford

Scania N113DRB/East Lancs Cityzen V334/5 EAK are both at work here.

Kimes, Folkingham

Leyland Titans TAZ 4061-4 (*KYV 328/70, 457, 516X*), YAZ 8773/4 (*KYN 308X, KYV 381X*), WAZ 8276-8 (*KYV 519X, NUW 661Y, OHV 711Y*) comprise the double-deck stock here.

A history of the fleet is being compiled by director David Odlin who will welcome pre-1985 information and photographs at R. Kime & Co Ltd, 3 Sleaford Road, Folkingham, Sleaford, Lincs, NG34 0SB.

Leisurelink (Wales), Cardiff

AEC Reliance/Duple Dominant Express II C53F ODV 405W has been acquired for spares from Welsh Dragon, Newport.

Leon, Finningley

Two East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents are now reported on order.

Leyland Fleetline 101 (HKU 361W) is reinstated for further service, but Alexander-bodied Fleetline 118 (GSD 724V) has gone to Doncaster Bus Breakers (dealer), Northern Counties-bodied Fleetline 134 (TSJ 34S) has been withdrawn and Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Atlantean 129 (ANA 49T) has gone to PVS, Carlton (dealer).

Leven Valley, Great Ayton, N Yorks

Recent acquisitions in yellow/red fleet colours are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander 87, 95 (N587/95 WND), named *Caedmon* and *St Cuthbert* respectively.

**London Central/
London General GA**

More new 10m Volvo B7TL/Plaxton President H41/21D are PVL18, 50/6-65/7-9, 71 (for registrations, see June 'Fleet News').

Refurbished Routemaster RMs from route 36 are gaining new floors and lighting as well as full repaints by First Mainline of Rotherham, Hants & Dorset at Eastleigh, Preston Street Coachworks of Faversham and Kent Coachworks at Northfleet.

MCW Metrobus open-topper OM241 gained much media coverage as Ken Livingstone's London purple-liveried mayoral 'battle bus'.

Dennis Dart LDP60 has been resealed to B34F layout (ex-B36F).

The constant cull of Leyland Titans has taken its toll — only nine remain licensed at Bexleyheath, 25 at New Cross, 10 at Peckham and five at Camberwell. The only scheduled route for them is the 172 from New Cross (and some peak 63s from Peckham) — all others are spares. Trainer Titan T1044 (A644 THV) has gone into a dedicated red and blue livery.

Bexleyheath Titans T329 (KYV 329X), T678, 737/74, 806 (OHV 678Y etc), T895, 906 (A895, 906 SYE) are delicensed and T779 (OHV 779Y), T917/27/48/59/67 (A917 SYE etc) and T1104 (B104 WUV) have been sold to Ensign, Purfleet (dealer) along with London General MCW Metrobuses M239/5B/60/5/89 (BYX 239V etc), M333 (EYE 333V), M359, 430/1/3/5, 514/32/97 (GYE 359W etc), M826/55 (OJD 826/55Y) and M1241 (B241 WUL).

Metrobus M607 (KYO 607X) has gone to Newcastle University for a charity mission to Ekumfi in Ghana.

London Traveller, Neasden

The other new Volvo B6BLE/East Lancs B34D are W516/8/9/21 CCK. Hired Dennis Dart V680 FPB has been returned.

London United

Further Plaxton President-bodied 10m Volvo B7TLs are VP105/7/8/11/16/24/89 (registrations as in June issue except VP105/24 are W448/72 BCW).

The last four Duple and Carlyle-bodied Dennis Darts in service were DT12/5, 74, 168 (G512/5 VYE, H74 MOB, 500 CLT). More sold are DT2, 6, 20/7 (G502 VYE etc) and DT45 (G45 TGV) to unidentified buyers, DT7 (G507 VYE) to Redby, Sunderland, DT9 (G509 VYE) to Classic, Annfield Plain and DT23 (G523 VYE) to Carter, Colchester; also Wright-bodied DWL3/4 (JDZ 2403/4) and Reeve Burgess-bodied DR2/5/6 (H102 THE etc) to McKindless, Wishaw. Leyland Nationals LS411/29 (BYW 411/29V) went to Thames Valley Training of Hammersmith and are being repainted in Blackpool cream and green.

A severe cull of MCW Metrobuses has cleared out M39, 43, 59, 68 (WYV 68T etc), M99, 162/83, 206/23 (BYX 99V etc), M327 (EYE 327V), M598 (GYE 598W), M697 (KYX 697X), M813/31/2/5/41/4/56 (OJD 813Y etc), M966/80 (A966/80 SYF), M1048 (A748 THV), M1106/10/66/87/242/69/72 (B106 WUL etc), M1029 (A729 THV) has been relegated to a driver trainer. Of these, M39, 183, 223, 598 and 813 passed to Nash, Weybridge (dealer), M43, 59, 99, 162 and 697 to unidentified buyers. M100 has gone to Truetime, Potters Bar. M138 to Bluebird, Middleton, M206 and M1110 to PVS, Carlton (dealer), M221 to Pilkington, Accrington, M856 to a buyer in France, M864/89 to Thorpe, Wembley while M1048 is being cannibalised at Stamford Brook garage.

Longstaff, Mirfield

Youthful Plaxton Verde-bodied Dennis Lance P2 JLL has been advertised for sale.

Lyles, Batley

An unusual acquisition is Leyland National 2 B363 LOY with nearside dual doors and offside centre doors for airport use.

Ludlow, Halesowen

More new Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer here are 8.8m MPD W446 DOP and B39F W448 DOP; previously-reported 8.8m W447 DOP displays a capacity option of 19 seated with 33 standees.

Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 B33F V332 EAK was bought new here.

Optare Solo M850 demonstrator T343 FWR has been in use as has Optare Excel GJI 2223.

Lyles, Dewsbury

Neoplan N122/3/CH57/20Ct B671 DVL is in stock.

McLean, Carterton, Oxon

Unusual Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B6 coach JUI 5133 is in use here, noted recently on rail replacement work.

Marshall, Leighton Buzzard

For schools work come ex-United Counties Bristol VRT/SL3/ECW HBD 915T and URP 940W, the former in Stagecoach stripes, the latter still wearing an overall advertisement for the *Evening Telegraph*.

Mayne, Manchester

Leyland Leopards 54 and 69 (ASV 764, SSV 269) have been reallocated to Warrington.

Bova 56 (N56 CNF) has been re-registered SIL 3856 and B10M 21 (P121 JNF) has become 906 GAU.

Warrington's Leyland Fleetline 9 (TET 746S) and Leopards 41, 60/9 (GDZ 3841, GIL 2160, HDB 357V) have been sold.

Metrobus, Orpington GA

More new 8.8m Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton MPD B29F are 318/40 (W318/40 VGX) for routes 464/494 and X38 and 791-9 (W791-9 VMV) for new services 200/300 (Horley-Gatwick).

Ex-Isle of Man Darts 771-5/8-82 have displaced Optare MetroRiders 911/3-5/7 (G972 WPA, H161/3/5 WWT, J326 PPD) to Guernseybus.

Plaxton-bodied Dart 711 (K711 KGU) has been written off after hitting a tree in South Norwood.

Metroline DG

The 16 Alexander-bodied Dennis Tridents expected for September for route 16 will displace older TAs on to routes 32 and 186.

Meanwhile, new 10.1m Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 2 B31D are DLD133-49 (W133-49 ULR **except** DLD135/40/4 are W151-3 ULR).

Ex-MTL AEC Routemasters RM268 and RML2511/633 have been painted into Metroline's red/blue livery, while private hire RM644 and RMC1513 have gone into traditional London Transport livery. Hopes that once-immaculate unrefurbished RML903 would be treated similarly appear to have been dashed as it has emerged freshly painted in MTL-style allover red.

MK Metro SG

Five more Optare Solos are reported due for September delivery.

All-MCW Metrobus DR104/8/H43/30F 241 (GOG 241W) and Dennis Dart 8.5SDL/Carlyle B28F 405/6 (H105/6 MOB) have been transferred from Border Buses, while Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 96/8/9 (G96 NBD etc) have gone in the opposite direction.

Mercedes-Benz 811D 95 (G114 PGT) now wears special College Express livery.

Wright-bodied Renault S75 HDZ 5481 has been acquired from First Leicester for spare parts and Plaxton-bodied 57 (J225 JUR) is also being cannibalised.

Metrobus 258 (DEM 758Y) has roller-blind indicator displays in place of unreliable dot matrix displays.

S75s 61/3 (K342 PJR, J223 JJR) have gone to Holts, Bolton (dealer), Mercedes-Benz 608D 29 (D129 VRP), 709Ds 66-8 (E66-8 MUV) and 811D 74 (F359 GKN) to Evans, Tredegar and 811Ds 78, 80 (G118 KUB, F906 YNY) to Blythswood, Glasgow (dealer).

National Car Parks

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer 2 V380 SVV is in use at Birmingham Airport.

Norbus, Kirkby

New Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton MPD V899 DNB is at work.

**North Birmingham Busways,
Erdington**

Former Plymouth Leyland Atlantean 31 (STK 131T) has been sold to Edwards, Llantwit Fardre.

Nottingham City Transport

More new Dennis Trident/East Lancs H53/34F are 647-9 (W647-9 SNN).

Volvo B6s 511-3 (M511-3 TRA) were noted driver training before sale to Traction Group.

Optional Bus, Horsforth, Leeds

MCW Metrobus MkII DR102/42/MCW H46/31F A202/3 OKJ are in stock from Arriva Southern Counties.

Oxford Bus Company GA

New Volvo B10BLE/Wright 816-21 are branded for service 15 and are the first new vehicles fitted with traffic light control transponders (now retrofitted fleet-wide).

Gary Palmer, Luton

This new operator, is operating ex-Lothian Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans OSC 602V and GSC 641X out of Booker Airfield on schools services.

Pete's Travel, West Bromwich

The first of the six Alexander ALX200-bodied Dennis Dart SLFs delivered by Mistral, Knutsford (dealer) is W902 JNF, while two additional Dart/Plaxton MPDs reported here are V266/7 BNV.

Minibuses P856/7 GRC and J393 NGG have passed to Dawsonrentals.

Ex-London United Dennis Dart 8.5SDL/Duple or Carlyle Dartline G50 TGV, H72/3, 81, 150/5 MOB and H165/7, 264 NON are all branded for service 451 (West Bromwich-Sutton Coldfield) where they now compete with Travel West Midlands Mercedes-Benz O.405N low-floors.

Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer SPD B42F S920 SVM has been acquired ex-Universal, Chadderton.

Pilkington, Accrington

Leyland National PIB 7014 (*MCA 675T*) is in a revised livery style with new Accrington & District fleetnames.

MCW Metrobus BYX 221V has been acquired from London United.

Plymouth Citybus

Most unusually, this municipal fleet has bought three buses from an independent. The vehicles in question are Volvo B10M-50 Citybus/Alexander H47/37F 195/6 (F50/1 ACL) and 197 (G623 OTV) — 197 was new to Trent — from Chambers, Bures. Identical vehicles bought from Trent are 187-9 (F604-6 GVO).

Leyland Leopard/Plaxton Supreme coaches 352/5 (KAD 352/5V) have been sold, 355 to Millman, Newton Abbot.

Poppleton, Pontefract

Acquisitions are Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RH/Plaxton Paramount 3200 II Express C53F B83 SWX from Arrive Southend and Leyland Lynx LX112L10ZR1R/B51F F401 PUR from Arriva the Shires.

Powell, Wickersley

Renault-Dodge 35 (E211 XWG) has been sold to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer).

Preston Bus

A further six East Lancs Lolyne-bodied Dennis Tridents are on order for September, taking the tally to 13. Last of the withdrawn Leyland Atlanteans to be sold was 162 (OBV 162X) — to Blackburn Borough, for further service.

Rai Transport, Handsworth, Birmingham

Former CentreWest Mercedes-Benz 811D/Alexander AM B28F F678 XMS is in use on service 97 (Birmingham-Chelmsley Wood). Coincidentally, it works alongside recently-acquired Marshall Capital-bodied Dart SLFs branded, London-style, as Red Arrow Express.

Reading Buses

116/7 (W116/7 SRX) are further Optare Solo M920/B34F. The last two-door MCW Metrobuses, 182/7, have been rebuilt to H45/27F and H45/28F respectively.

Reading Mainline

The projected last day of AEC Routemaster operations of 22 July, the sixth anniversary of their launch here, still depends upon replacement Excels being ready. Routemaster No.30 (ALM 37B) is being preserved in London red.

Red Kite, Tilsworth, Beds

Former Go-Coastline Leyland Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F JTY 373/5/7/8/80X are at work on schools service 950, still in their former owner's blue and red livery.

Ringwood Coaches, Staveley

New here is Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver B30FL W632 MKY, in white with 'dial-a-bus' and 'X67' branding.

Road Car YT

New vehicles are Dennis Dart SLF/East Lancs Spryte B39F 522/3 (W522/3 XEE) and from Yorkshire Traction come Leyland National 2 NL116L11/1R/B49F 221/5/6 (EDT 221/5/6V), B52F 222 (EDT 222V), NL116AL11/1R/B52F 228 (LWE 228W) and Volvo-powered 224 (EDT 224V).

In addition to the Yorkshire Terrier Leyland Olympians moving across, 10 older Olympian ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F — NKU 601-3X, OWG 604-8X and SHE 609/10Y — are in course of transfer from Yorkshire Traction.

Open-top conversion of Leyland Atlanteans 1369/89 (TRN 479/69V) has been completed at Barnsley's Yorkshire Traction workshops, 1367/85 (TRN 467/85V) following later — all for use at Skegness.

A suspected arson attack at Great Northern Terrace in Lincoln has totally destroyed Renault S75s 181/7/90/1 (G881 WML etc) and badly damaged 176 (G876 WML); consequently, delicensed S56s 87, 98 (G327 MUA, E498 HHN) are back in use and 66 and 106 (D36 NFU, E506 HHN) have been reinstated.

East Lancs-bodied Atlantean 252 (XRF 268) is again re-registered, to MBZ 7142, Alexander-bodied Leyland Leopard 1446 (TSJ 46S) becoming CFE 846S and Leyland National 2802 (MBZ 7142) reverted to its original MEL 552P before being sold for scrap. Atlantean 1322 (RDX 12R), Leopard 1477 (NPA 224W) and Nationals 2310/872 (SPC 270R, DET 472V) have been withdrawn.

Withdrawn MCW Metroriders 23/7/9, 30/1/9 (D523/7/9/30/1 SKY, E539 VKY) have gone to Yorkshire Traction and better examples may be overhauled and transferred elsewhere in the Traction Group.

Ross, Featherstone

Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2 V967 RCX is at work.

Rossendale Transport

All-white Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B39F 144/5 (S724/5 KNV) and similar but B41F 147 (S377 TNB) are on lease here until September from Dawsonrentals, with Easiride fleetnames for service 464 (Accrington-Rochdale).

Shamrock, Pontypridd

New at Newport is Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Frazer Nash C26F W258 WRV. Double-decker stock has been further modernised by the acquisition of ex-London Central Leyland Titans OHV 764/75Y at Barry and OHV 687/93Y, A901/30/73 SYE at Abercynon, all retaining red paintwork. Following these, OHV 750Y and A927/48/84 SYE were delivered to Newport but quickly moved on.

Withdrawals are of Bristol VRT/SL3s GRF 702V and CJH 125V, along with Leyland Atlanteans SND 526X and ANA 545Y, but CJH 125V and VR ALZ 7137 (RUA 453W) are back in use at Barry, while and ex-Venture Daimler Fleetline GHV 995N has also been reinstated.

Atlanteans NRG 169M, MVK 541R, ONF 665R, JFV 315S, Leyland Nationals XDL 794L, JJG 908P, RHB 995R, SKG 906S, YYE 282T, EUM 892T, GMB 669T, TTC 535T, AYR 349T and Mercedes-Benz C327 UFP, C141 JTA, F670 DBO, K927 AEP, K930 AEP and L465 XNR have been withdrawn and either sold or scrapped on site.

Dennis Javelin M711 HBC is in allover white and is at Newport, ex-Barry. Van Hool-bodied DAF PIL 2488 (F643 OHD), Plaxton-bodied Ford R1014 PIL 2489 (YHA 334X), Plaxton-bodied Leyland Tigers MIL 6783/4 (VOY 181/OX) and Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard AEF 819A (OMA 508V) have all passed to the Bridgend Bus Company.

Shearings

The complete batch of Volvo B10M-62/Jonckheere C53F 601-15 (M601-15 ORJ) has been re-acquired from Volvo Coach Sales, Loughborough (dealer). Sales are of B10M 454 (K454 TVR) to Northern Blue, Oswaldtwistle, 456 (K456 VVR) to Fraser Eagle, Accrington, Scania K113CRBs 561-9 (L561-9 FND) to Carlton, Hellaby (dealer), B10Ms 617 (M617 ORJ) to Mott, Aylesbury and 630 (M630 KVV) to Chambers, Bures.

Silcox, Pembroke Dock

Another new coach is Dennis Javelin 245/Berkhof Axial C51FR W108 NDE for the Grand UK Holidays programme. Secondhand Javelins acquired are ex-MoD 245/UVG UniStar C53F N356 NDE and Wadham Stringer Vanguard II C53F-bodied K780 UDE and K723 DWN, all converted from lefthand drive. LAG Panoramics A5/8 WLS (G994 FVV, F628 SRP) and Duple-bodied Volvo B58-61 EHW 294W have been sold and Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard 538 OHU (ASD 162T) and Duple-bodied Leopards WBX 870T, HDE 250, 611N have been withdrawn.

Silverdale, Nottingham

Former Barton Plaxton-bodied Leyland Leopard RRC 489R is at work here.

Skills, Nottingham

New deliveries are Setra S315GT-HD/C49F1 43 (W643 RNU) and Volvo B10M-62/Jonckheere Mistral C51F1 91 (W191 SNR). Acquired from Park of Hamilton are B10M-62/Van Hool Alizée C49F1 N501 PYS and P260/2 YGG (KSK 983, HSK 654/7). A major renumbering exercise has been undertaken, viz: 3-9 (UIW 9748, R412 BGU, R501 BUA, JUI 7906, M150 PKM, L125 XBD, R214 BMV) have become 80, 78/9, 82, 75-7; 10-2/4-7 (P210/1 FRC, R612/4-6 AAU, T80 SMC) have become 25/6/9-32, 24; 22 (T322 KNN) is now 92; 30/1 (N300, 400 TCC) are 37/8; 40-3/6 (N140 ARC, N746 BAU, N43 ARC, F46 LCH) are now 91/7/8/6; 53 (JUI 6153) is now 95; 67 (YXI 5860) is now 99; 70/4 (JUI 9570, IIL 7074) are now 81, 94; 85 (UIW 2285) is now 90 and 91/2 (CAZ 2045/6) are now 83/4

As reported under last month's Airbus heading, upon closure of the Brighton depot, Plaxton-bodied Volvos B40, 50, 60, 70, 80, 90 (N40 SLK etc) and Plaxton-bodied DAF 21 (N21 ARC) all went to Airlinks. Most of the Setras are to be re-registered, first reported being 34/8 (T934 YRR, N400 TCC) to SIL 6434/8.

Solent Blue Line

MCW Metrobus Mk2/MCW DPH43/27F 54 (F765 EKM) is an acquisition from Stagecoach East Kent and is in full livery. Bristol VRT/SL2 37 (NDL 637M) has also been noted freshly painted in latest livery.

Sovereign Bus & Coach BL

The Welwyn-Hatfield Line operation and livery is to cease with service revisions in July.

SS Suncruisers, Scarborough

Open-top Northern Counties-bodied Leyland Atlantean ORJ 366W and ECW-bodied Daimler Fleetline KMW 176P are acquisitions from Applebys. The other open-toppers this year are Fleetline/MCW SS1/5 (KON 327P, NHR 165M), Park Royal-bodied SS2 (MOM 573P), Roe-bodied SS7 (KBE 108P) and un-numbered UWA 155S, along with Bristol VRT/SL2 SS4 (HPK 507N).

Stagecoach Burnley & Pendle ST

Additional to the MCW Metrobuses from Manchester (5040/55/120/58/73 renumbered as 1223-7), Bristol VRT/SL3 2030 (DBV 30W) and Leyland Olympians 2107/8 (JFR 7/8W) have come from Ribble to assist with schools contracts won recently. The PSV Circle reports that vehicles began carrying Ribble legal lettering from late-May.

Stagecoach Busways ST

Acquisitions from Ribble are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander AM B23F 1517-9 (G181/5 PAO, G578 PFM). The United States Air Force has provided Dodge G13/Wadham Stringer driver trainer DT23 (G675 XTN, 90 B 2063), allocated to Sunderland. Leyland Olympian 661 (C661 LFT) is another withdrawn, along with 709Ds 1428/37 (E428/37 AFT), whilst similar 1401/15/9 (D401 TFT etc), 1425/31/47/54/6/8 (E425 AFT etc) have been cannibalised and remains broken up, 1429/42 (E429/42 AFT) passed to HD Bus Solutions (dealer) and 1455 (E455 AFT) went to St George Travel, Washington. Olympians 613/31 (C613/31 LFT) have gone on loan to Stagecoach Manchester.

Stagecoach Cambus ST

Volvo B10M-62s 452-4 (N452 XVA, R453/4 FCE) have been transferred from Cambus (452/4) and Viscount (453) to Stagecoach Midland Red. Bristol LH 65 (OFB 965R) and AEC Reliance 73 (SFL 373R, 49 CNG, NEB 349R), both driver trainers, have been replaced by newly-acquired Dodge G13/Wadham Stringer trainers 48/9, one of which was previously registered 80 KF 23. Withdrawn Leyland Leopard trainer TVR26 (XMS 253R) has been taken away for scrap by Hardings. An earlier trainer, Bristol FS5G 21 (FVF 423C) is now a travellers' caravan, usually kept at Rochford, Essex and in London red.

Stagecoach Cheltenham & Gloucester Group ST

Cheltenham & Gloucester Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 679/83 (G679/83 AAD) have been transferred to Stagecoach South. Secondhand Leyland Olympian news is that ANA 6Y has not been transferred from Stagecoach Manchester, but similar Northern Counties H43/30F-bodied 145/8/9 (ANA 10, B/9Y) have come from the same source to Cheltenham & Gloucester, while Cheltenham District has numbered ex-Busways C641/7 LFT as 133/7.

Stagecoach Cumberland ST

The vehicles acquired in May with Arriva North West's Heysham Travel business (which retain their fleet numbers) were Van Hool Alizée-bodied Volvo B10M coaches 0001/2 (OIW 5804, VKB 708), Mercedes 709D/North West Coach Sales B22F 93/4 (H838/9 GLD), Alexander H43/32F-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 1055 (A135 HLV), 1881/2/4-7 (XEM 881W etc), 1932/3/61/5 (ACM 732X etc), Leyland National 2s 5299 (LFR 872X), 6126/8/32 (WWW 909W, VBG 128V, WWW 911W), 6203 (NHH 381W), Leyland Leopard 6927 (GSG 127T) and Leyland Tiger 7012/3/5/20 (CKC 626/4X, EKA 215/20Y), all with Duple Dominant C49F bodies, and B22F Optare MetroRiders 7807-9 (L807-9 TFY).

Group codes	
AA	— Arriva Passenger Services
BL	— Blazefield Holdings
DG	— DelGro
EY	— EYMS Group
FG	— FirstGroup
GA	— Go-Ahead Group
NX	— National Express Group
SG	— Status Bus & Coach Group
ST	— Stagecoach Holdings
YT	— Traction Group

Another two roof-damaged Leyland Olympians acquired for conversion into smart open-toppers are ex-Stagecoach Midland Red ONLXB/1R/ECW H45/32F 2145 (A545 HAC) and similar SHE 311Y from East Midland. Even so, Kendal can muster open-top Bristol VRT/SL3s 2035-8 (and Olympians 2102/29) this season, newly-converted 2017 (B117 TVU) being used at Keswick on the Seatoller service.

Leyland Olympian 1007 has been away on loan to assist East Midland (q.v.).

Leyland Leopard/Alexander driver trainer 3003 (RUT 842) has been re-registered SHH 122M. I'm pleased to report that, despite a major group influx of Dodge G13s for use as driver trainers, Lancaster's similar ex-Western Leopard trainer 3004 (TCK 841, SCS 355M) continues in use here, smartly finished with polished wheeltrims.

Volvo B10M-62s 100/27-9 (M255 BDM, L127 NAO, N128/9 VAO) and Mercedes-Benz 709D 613 (K613 UFR) have been transferred to Ribble.

Stagecoach Devon ST

The first of the ex-Citybus, Hong Kong Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer B37F delivered to **Devon General**, HB 9296, has been numbered 758 (P758 FOD); a second similar vehicle here is HB 4996.

Another Selkent Leyland Titan TNLXB2RR/H44/24D transferred is 962 (NUW 630Y), while older cannibalised Titan 950 (KYN 282X) has been sold to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) for scrap.

Stagecoach East Midland ST

Ex-East London Dennis Darts 804-25 went into service at Chesterfield with driver security screens still in place although the intention had been to remove them. A visit by the Vehicle Inspectorate to Mansfield depot led to most of the vehicles allocated there being taken off service — indeed with some voluntary withdrawals as well, fewer than 10 of the allocation was still active on 13/14 May. This prompted a huge array of 51 vehicles drafted in from other Group fleets to cover in early May, comprising Mercedes-Benz minibuses, Volvo B10Ms and Olympians, Leyland Olympians, a Fleetline and Nationals, Optare MetroRiders, Dennis Darts and Tridents from Burnley & Pendle, Busways, Cheltenham & Gloucester, Chesterfield (Fleetline 263: OCU 822R), Sussex Coastline, Gloucester Citybus, Grimsby Cleethorpes, Hartlepool, Hull, Lancaster, Manchester (Leyland National 271: JIL 7608 — new to Midland General as XRB 416L), Red & White, Ribble, Swindon & District, Transit, Viscount and Western Buses.

Further, from Maun International came Dennis Dominators A211 EHN, C113 CAT, FGE 440X, Leyland Atlanteans MNC 513W, A684 HNB and Leyland Fleetline UWA 150S, while Skills of Nottingham provided Volvo B10M 68 (YXI 8421) and Dunn-Line of Nottingham lent Scania T49 CNN and SJI 1829.

Leyland National 2 34 (OWB 34X) has been withdrawn after use as a mobile canteen, while Leyland Lynx 64 (E60 WDT) has been retired with driveshaft failure, Olympians 299, 300 (TWF 201/2Y) and National 2 614 (EKW 614V) also going. National 2 626 (LAG 189V) has gone to Thompson, Clay Cross (dealer) for scrap, while accident-damaged Olympian 311 (SHE 311Y) has gone to Stagecoach Cumberland.

Of the ten Leyland Lynxes delivered new to Chesterfield, just 65 (E61 WDT) remains in service.

Stagecoach Manchester ST

As a result of the takeover of some of the services of Universal Buses, Chadderton in April, Universal's former Travel West Midlands Dennis Dart 9SDL/Wright Handybus B32F KDZ 5801-5 were taken into stock as 01-5.

Two more ex-Kenya Bus Dennis Dragon/AVA six-wheel double-deckers received for the Magic Bus fleet are 698/9 (KAG 932E, 472T), while more conventional, yet surprising arrivals on loan from Busways are its Alexander-bodied Leyland Olympians 613/31 (C613/31 LFT). Olympians 3091/137 have been repainted in Magic Bus blue.

G840 UDV, a Mercedes-Benz 811D/Carlyle B33F, has been transferred from Stagecoach Oxford, while 709D/Alexander 509-11/6/8 (N653 VSS etc) have been withdrawn, with 510/1/8 joining similar 512-5/7 at Oxford.

Stolen Leyland Olympian/Northern Counties H43/30F 3154 (B154 XNA) has not been recovered and is considered withdrawn. Contrary to earlier information, withdrawn Olympian 3006 (ANA 6Y) has not gone to Cheltenham & Gloucester, but 3008-10 (ANA 8-10Y) have made that journey.

Mercedes Varios 1/2 (V253/4 BNV) were returned to Dawsonrentals in May.

Stagecoach Midland Red ST

Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Expressliner II C49Ft 31-3 (N452 XVA, R454/3 FCE) have been transferred from Cambus and (33) Viscount.

Former Stagecoach Manchester Leyland National 257 (SJI 4558, CFM 352S) is numbered 0257 here and works from Leamington Spa. Otherwise, recent transfers of Dennis Darts from Busways and United Counties have reduced the National fleet, so there are just 10 shared between Nuneaton and Rugby, with Banbury sporting only two, 621/7 (PUK 621/7R).

Accident-damaged Olympian 905 (A545 HAC) has gone to Cumberland for full open-top conversion.

Conversely, Mercedes-Benz 811D/Wright B31F 424 (K424 ARW) is back in regular service at Banbury after a period in ancillary use, while 709D/Reeve Burgess B25F F770 FDV and F409 KOD have transferred from Oxford.

Leyland Atlanteans 983/9 (AVK 168/43V) have been sold to West Kent, Chislehurst (dealer).

Stagecoach Oxford ST

Dennis Lance 1200 (P452 BPH) has been on loan; it's no stranger to the area, having been used by Oxford Bus Company in spring 1998.

Acquisitions from Stagecoach Manchester are Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander Sprint 453-5 (N653 VSS etc), while 811D 364 (G840 UDV) has gone the opposite way and 709Ds 333/9 (F770 FDV, F409 KOD) have passed to Stagecoach Midland Red;

Other withdrawals are of Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 327/9/31/44 (F764/6/8 FDV, F402 KOD), 811D 361 (G837 UDV) and driver trainers 98, 1010 and 3318 (LSV 670, OCA 410P, AFJ 738T); 98 and 3318 were notably the last vehicles remaining from the company's predecessors, South Midland and Devon General respectively.

Dodge G13 trainers T1/2 are at work, with similar T3 awaiting its first use and re-registration.

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M 22 (J456 FSR) remained here in late-April awaiting collection by Bluebird. There are now no single-deck coaches at work on the Oxford Tube — an uncommon example of an all-double-deck coach service these days.

Ford Transit 122 (D122 PTT) has passed to the Oxford Bus Museum and is to receive Thames Transit colours.

Stagecoach Red & White ST

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B6 721 (L81 CWO) was badly damaged by fire in May and is expected to be written off. Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 319-21 (K319-21 YKG) have been transferred to Bluebird.

To clarify, Porth depot currently uses Stagecoach Rhondda fleetnames and all other depots use Stagecoach Red & White.

Stagecoach Ribble ST

1127-9 (L127 NAO, N128/9 VAO), Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton C46F1, C44Ft-seated M255 BDM and Mercedes-Benz 709D/Alexander B25F 613 (K613 UFR) have been transferred from Cumberland.

Leyland National 340 (BUH 240V) has passed to Specialised Transport Training, Liverpool and 709D/Alexander 568 (G568 PRM) has been withdrawn.

Stagecoach South/East Kent Groups ST

Transfers in from Cheltenham & Gloucester are 823/9 (G683/79 AAD), Mercedes-Benz 709D/PMT B25F, thought to be destined for Sussex Bus.

The two ex-Busways Dennis Darts on South West Trains feeder services, 406/7 (XYK 976, NFX 667) have been formally acquired from East London after over four years on extended loan.

1201/10, the first of the Dennis Lance/Plaxton Verde transferred from Selkent, has been rebuilt from B42D to B46F, with 1210 operating for South Coast Buses at Eastbourne. On the subject of body layouts, Hampshire Bus Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer park-&-ride buses 25-8 are B33F and have air conditioning and tinted glass; and ex-Hong Kong Citybus Darts 430/1/3-7 have been downseated from DP39F to DP36F.

Optare Excel L1150/B42F R818 WJA, previously with Universal Buses, Chadderton, has been on loan to East Kent, covering for the absence of Darts away for body rectification.

Three Leylands delicensed for disposal are ex-Portsmouth National 2 143 (URV 115N) and Titans 7240/60 (EYE 240V, GYE 260V). Disposals are of National 2s 120-2 (GYJ 920-2V), 130/8 (HUF 579, 626X), ex-Portsmouth 140 (CPO 98W) and ex-Ribble 159 (YRN 816V), Titan 7259 (OHV 759Y) and Bristol VRT/SL3/6LXB 7651 (XJL 651V). All went to Hardwick, Carlton (dealer) except 121 (broken up by East Kent), 7259 (Nash, Weybridge — dealer) and 7651 (Chepstow Classic Buses).

Mercedes-Benz 709D 840 has been painted into Sussex Bus red/white.

Stagecoach Transit ST

I am pleased to report that former Southdown Leyland Titan PD3/4 open-topper 189 (PRX 189B) is back on the Hartlepool Shopping Shuttle service, running from 29 May to September this year.

Volvo B10M Interurban 81 moved from Hull to Darlington, but was expected back in Hull for the school holidays. Darlington's Mercedes-Benz Varios 355/6 have been exchanged for Hull's Northern Counties-bodied Volvo B10Ms 712/3.

Dennis Dominators continue to wander in and out of service at Stockton and Hull. 242/3 (F142/3 BKH) are back in service at Hull, while Alexander-bodied 207 (B107 UAT), Northern Counties-bodied 216-8 (B216-8 OAJ) and East Lancs-bodied 212/24-6/8/9/31 (C112 CAT etc) have been returned from the dealer to which they were earlier reported sold.

In June, Dominators remaining in service were Ferry Bus 232 (E132 SAT) and standard 242-4/9-51 (F142 BKH etc) at Hull, with Northern Counties-bodied 221 (C221 WAJ) and East Lancs-bodied 246-8 (F146-8 BKH) at Stockton.

Withdrawn Dennis Falcon 531 (B31 PAJ) has been sold to the Darlington Playbus Association.

Stagecoach United Counties ST

Dodge G13/Wadham Stringer 1013 (D780 ENV) is an acquired driver trainer, now to B8F layout.

Volvo B10M-62/Jonckheere 102/3 (L157/8 LBW) have been re-registered 647 DYE and WLT 908 respectively.

Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton 107 (F107 NRT) has been sold to Fleetlink (dealer).

Stephenson, Rochford

This operator is newly branded Stephenson's of Essex rather than Stephenson's Coaches.

Ex-Southend Duple Caribbean-bodied Leyland Tiger A249 SVW has been smartly repainted in livery with new wheeltrims and was used on Southend Borough Council's contracted open-top service 67 on Derby Day. Covering for the other scheduled open-topper was contrasting ex-Eastern Counties Leyland National 2 MDS 868V, perhaps the scruffiest bus ever to have operated on normal service in Southend (in its former owner's colours with areas of primer/undercoat). Drivers issued vouchers for a free day-rover on an open-topper at any later date.

Ex-Leisurelink (Wales) open-top Bristol VRT/SL3 GTX 754W has been sold without use here.

Stockton-on-Tees Borough Council

Two new vehicles for Social Services used here in a red livery with EasyRider branding are Optare Excel V823 DHN and Optare Solo V648 EEF, each one of a pair of these types.

Stones, Leigh

Two more of the six new Dennis Dart SLF/Plaxton Pointer MPD B28F midis have been identified as J5 BUS and T1 KET.

Stagecoach Devon 922 (J822 HMC), one of the Alexander-bodied Scania N113DRBs transferred from East London and rebuilt as a Bristol VR-replacement convertible open-topper.

KEITH MASON



Stott, Milnsbridge

Two more ex-Sovereign Mercedes-Benz 709D/Reeve Burgess Beaver B23F acquired are H920/91 FGS.

Sweyne, Swinefleet, E Yorks

Leyland Swift LBM6T/2RA/Wadham Stringer Vanguard II B39F G114 VMM is acquired from Harrogate & District.

Teamdeck, Honley

Following Arriva Yorkshire's acquisition of the Leeds-based operations in April ('Fleet News' July), Ambermile and K-Line operations at Honley passed to this new company along with DAF SB220/Plaxton Prestige B45F R33 GNW (for service 319: Berry Brow-Huddersfield Royal Infirmary), SB220/Optare Delta DP42F S159 JUA and SB220/ikarus B49F S401 JUA (service 360: Brackenhill-Huddersfield Royal Infirmary) and Leyland National 2s DOC 41, 52V from Leeds.

The other Teamdeck vehicles are SB220 J802 KHD, National 2s NWY 554V (*DOC 28V*) and Optare MetroRiders MOI 2836 (*H707 UNW*) and J716 CUM.

An additional vehicle at Leeds in K-Line blue is Leyland National BYW 359V, ex-Parfitt, Rhymney Bridge.

Late-built National 2 C103 UHO — latterly an Arriva Yorkshire driver trainer — has been acquired as a source of spares.

Tellings-Golden Miller SG

Dennis Dart SLFs R501-14 SJM now have wheelchair ramps and have been downseated from B39F to B36F, P290-6 FPK are similarly fitted but remain B39F.

Thompson, Parkgate, Rotherham

Leyland Leopards COF 707V (Plaxton C51F) and WCK 133V (Duple C51F) have both gone to Hardwick, Carlton for scrap.

Timeline, Leigh

New Volvo B10M-62/Plaxton Premiere 903 (W903 JBA) is a surprise addition to stock, while 904/5 (W904/5 JBA) are MAN 18.350/Neoplan Transliner C49Ft. Dennis Javelin/Neopians 908/10/1/6/7 (M908 OVR etc) have returned to Carlton, Hellaby (dealer).

TM Travel, Old Tupton

J731 FVF is another Volvo B10M acquired. It has Plaxton Paramount 3500 C49Ft bodywork, was new to Sanders, Holt and is used on East Yorkshire contract work.

B10M/Plaxton Premiere K249 PCV has been re-registered K44 TMT.

Leyland National AYJ 93T is back in service after repairs.

National 2 FDV 830V has been on loan to Aston Express, Killamarsh.

Town & Country, Thurrock

The ex-West Yorkshire PTE MCW Metrobus returned to Ensignbus was 117 (UWW 517X).

Northern Blue, Oswaldtwistle

Former Shearings Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M K454 VVR has been acquired, while Blackburn Transport provided Caetano-bodied B10Ms E635 PFV (*MIB 920*) and LJJ 749 in exchange for National Greenways 21-4 (SIB 6706, 1282/3, 6716) following an end to competition on service 464; that situation has also seen Leyland Leopard YCS 93T and Leyland Tigers A666/7 KUM return to Blue Bus, Horwich.

Travel West Midlands NX

Developing last month's report about new Volvo B7TL/Plaxton President H45/29F, 4110/1 (V110, 411 MOA) have been re-registered W411 DOE and W411 DOP, while 4118 (V118 MOA) was re-registered W118 DOP after entering service; all three are confirmed at Perry Barr with 4111/8 having Sutton Lines branding. Walsall's 4054/5 have electronic front destination displays of different types. Acocks Green expects 4121-4 to DP standard for its share of service 900 (Birmingham-Birmingham International Airport-Coventry).

Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 demonstrator V929 FMS was parked in Miller Street garage in late-May.

West Bromwich is route-branding vehicles for service 451 with a yellow flash, 1623-5 being early recipients, 1626/7 have flashes without branding (thus far).

Refurbished Leyland Lynx 1166 (one of those loaned last year to Travel Dundee and now at Coventry), are being rebuilt with rounded wheelarches and plain skirt panelling; Travel Your Bus 1096 and 1214 have been similarly treated and are branded for service 38Y.

Volvo B10Ls 1451-5 have been transferred to Travel Your Bus for service 97Y, while Lynxes 1141/213/5/7/8/21-5/97, MCW Metrobus 2005, Mercedes-Benz Vario 249 and Volvo B6LEs 501-9 have gone to Travel Merry Hill.

More Metrobuses sold are 2110/69/215/47 (GOG 110W etc), 2309/11 (KJW 309/11W), 2332/8/81/2 (LOA 332X etc), while 2382/96/412 (LOA 382X etc) and arson-damaged 2930 (D930 NDA) and 3027 (F27 XOF) have been withdrawn. Also withdrawn are Lynxes 1132/73/281 (G132 EOG etc), Travel Your Bus DAF SB220/Optare Deltas 2-5 (G215-8 HCP) and minibuses 201/10/2.

Trent Buses

Recently delivered Optare Excels 216-9 are at Langley Mill in Black Cat red/white livery and 220-4 are with Barton at Nottingham in red/green/yellow Rushcliffe Line livery.

After a lengthy period in storage, Volvo B10M/Plaxton Expressliner 4 (L804 MRA) is back in service at Langley Mill to provide cover for other National Express coaches.

DAF SB220/Optare Delta 317 has been transferred from Barton Buses to Trent Buses and similar 301-6/9-11 are in standard Barton Buses red/cream, 301-6 (Rushcliffe Line) and 309-11 (Cotgrave Connection) having lost their route branding.

Former Skyline-branded MAN/Optare Vectas 811/2 have been re-branded for service 555 (Heanor-Beeston), replacing Mercedes-Benz Varios 298/9, now in standard Trent Buses red/cream.

Former Kinchbus Mercedes-Benz L814 DJU has been numbered 44 in Trent Buses stock and wears a variation of 'Rainbow 1' livery with 'Connect 1' branding.

Further Volvo Citybus/Alexander double-deckers withdrawn are 604-7 (F604-7 GVO) — 604-6 going to Plymouth Citybus — leaving just 608-11 while the Optare MetroRider fleet is reduced to 12 (1217-21/35-41) with the sale of 1213-6 (N213-6 VRC) to Yorkshire Traction and 1227-34 (P227-34 CTV) to Wilts & Dorset. Leyland National 471 (URB 471S) is now with Bowers, Chapel-en-le-Frith.

A second Optare Sigma-bodied Dennis Lance relegated to driver training work is 363 (N363 VRC).

Universal Buses, Walsden

Before the demise of this operator, Leyland Olympian ONTL11/2R/Northern Counties DPH47/30F OSK 774 was acquired from Budden, Romsey.

Walsh, Halifax

Ford Transit/Dormobile B20F G188 GSG is ex-Rowe, Muirkirk.

White Rose, Thorpe, Surrey

Leyland Titan T968 (A968 SYE) is another to arrive from London Central, supplementing T756 and 1123 (OHV 756Y, B123 WUV) now in use. Ex-London United Leyland Nationals BYW 411/29V went to Thames Valley Training, not here.

Dennis Trident/Alexander ALX400 demonstrator V929 FMS has been in use on schools and rail replacement duties.

Yorkshire Terrier YT

East Lancs Myllemium-bodied DAF SB220s 2471-9/81/2 are B47F. 2471-6 displaced Leyland National 2s 2011/6/7 and 2023/31/82 to Holbrook.

Ex-Nottingham Volvo B6/Alexander Dash B40F 2226-35 (L501-10 OAL) have all been delivered, 2231 being first in use, while 2230/4 were stored at Holbrook and 2232/3/5 went to Ecclesfield for preparation. Volvo B10M-61/Plaxton Paramount 3200 II C46Ft 52 (NHE 340, *E667 UNE*) has been transferred from Yorkshire Traction.

Leyland Olympian 1602 (L605 NOS) has been despatched to Yorkshire Traction's workshops for refurbishment and transfer to Road Car, with 1601/3-5 (L601 NOS etc) due to follow.

Leyland National 45 (VRP 530S) has been sold for scrap.

Yorkshire Traction YT

Further ex-Trent Buses Optare MetroRider MR15/B31F to arrive are 363-8 (M211-6 VRC) while DAF SB3000/Van Hool Alizée C44Ft 42 (R32 JYG) has come from Arriva Yorkshire.

Optare Solo demonstrator T789 KNW has been at work at Bamsley on Ward Green services 30A/B and its subsequent failure brought another Solo demonstrator, T343 FWR.

Leyland National 2s 221/5/6 (EDT 221V etc) have been downseated to B49F from B52F and transferred with 222/4/8 (EDT 222/4V, LWE 228W) to Road Car (q.v.). MCW Metroriders 325 and 537 (F325 FDT, E537 VKY) are further examples to go north to Strathtay. Volvo 52 (NHE 340) has been transferred to Yorkshire Terrier.

Z&S, Aylesbury

Leyland Titan KYV 423X was recently acquired, joining sisters KYV 375X and A891 SYE on schools services and rail replacement work.

Zak's, Great Barr

New Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814/Plaxton Beaver 2s W851/2 TBC are at work on service 424 and acquired example T293 ROF is also active here. Ex-Leon, Finningley Mercedes-Benz 609D/Reeve Burgess B19F D734 PWF has also been acquired.

Group codes

- AA — Arriva Passenger Services
- BL — Blazefield Holdings
- DG — DelGro
- EY — EYMS Group
- FG — FirstGroup
- GA — Go-Ahead Group
- NX — National Express Group
- SG — Status Bus & Coach Group
- ST — Stagecoach Holdings
- YT — Traction Group

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

A special word of thanks to the several new correspondents for your first reports to me this month. As ever, particular thanks to my regular correspondents, for you make 'Fleet News' what it is today. So, a welcome vote of thanks this month to:

Airbus, *Anglian Review*, Matthew J. Arnold, Bill Ashcroft, Andrew Babbs, Andrew Bagshaw, Eric Baldock, Chris Barker, Harry L. Barker, Andrew Bartlett, Jason Beverley, Michael Bewes, Kenneth N. Bladon, Simon Blake, Martin Bott, Peter Bown, Stephen Briggs, Julian Brinkworth, Bristol Interest Circle, *Bristol Passenger*, British Bus Publishing, British Trolleybus Society, Mark Bullock, J. Bultena, The Bus Club Ltd, *Bus Fare*, The Cambridge Omnibus Society, *Cambus*, Roger Carey, D. J. Carter, The Channel Islands Bus Society, Andrew P. Churchill, Arriva Southend, *Cleveland Transit News*, Harry W. Cooke, Tony Coram, Chris Corroy, D. A. Coulson, Richard Crammer, Paul Crate, Crosville Enthusiasts Club, Gareth Crowther, Cumbria Transport Society, Richard Delahoy, Devon General Society, Geoff W. Dickson, Nigel Diplock, James Dunkley, Eastern Transport Collection, Ensignbus, David Enticott, Essex Bus Enthusiasts Group, Nick Field, FirstBus Enthusiasts Group, Adam Floyd, Ian Francis, Fylde Tramway Society, J. B. Gaff, Mark Garrett, Greater Manchester Transport Society, George W. F. Green, Guide Friday, Toby Hart, A. D. Healey, Paul M. Houghton, D. Johnson, Paul Kelly, Steven Knight, Lancaster & Morecambe PSV Society, Leicester Citybus, Byron Lewis, Gary Llewellyn, *Lincolnshire & East Yorkshire Transport Review*, London Central, London Omnibus Traction Society, Christopher J. Lowe, Adam Lower, M&D and East Kent Bus Club, David Mallon, Manx Electric Railway Society, *Manx Transport Review*, Ian R. McNeil, Merseyside Bus Club, Metroliner, Romana Mewett, Midland Counties PSV Society, Geoff R. Mills, Paul Morrey, Peter Mudel, Mike Nash, G. C. Nelson, Newbury Bus Club, Billy Nicol, Simon Nicholas, David A. Noddings, North Birmingham Busways, Northern Group Enthusiasts Club, *North Essex PSV News*, Northumbria Enthusiasts Club, Stephen Osman, Oxford, Deric Pemberton, James Penton, Timothy Phillips, Tony Phillips, John R. D. Podgorski, Bill Potter, Steve Powell, Aiden Proctor, Provincial, PSV Circle, Michael A. Quinney, Jonathan Radley, Ribbles Enthusiasts Club, S. G. Richards, Peter Rigalsford, Road Car, Mike Robins, Laurie Rufus, Dave Russell, Keith Sadler, M. J. Saltmarsh, Steve Sanderson, Phil Shafe, Sheffield Omnibus Enthusiasts Society, Mark A. Smith, R. G. Smith, Solent Omnibus Club, Southampton, Southdown Enthusiasts Club, Southern Vectis, Eric Speckman, Alan Spencer, Staffordshire Bus Enthusiast Group, *Stage Carriage*, Stagecoach Transit, David J. Stanier, Swindon Vintage Omnibus Society, Daniel Tancock, *TBC News*, *Terminus*, The Thames Valley & Aldershot Bus Interest Circle, *The Enthusiast*, Dave B. Thomas, Nick Thomson, Peter Ticehurst, Tillingbourne, Richard Todd, Transpire — The Chesterfield Bus Society, Travel West Midlands, Allen Trenchard, Trent Buses, Roy Turner, *Ultimate*, United Counties, United Enthusiasts Club, D. E. Wall, Philip R. Wallis, R. M. Warwick, J. Watson, *The Waybill*, Michael P. Webster, *Wessex bi-monthly REVIEW*, The Wessex Transport Society, West Yorkshire Information Service, *West Yorkshire Metro Transport News*, *Wheels*, D. C. Wilder, Eric Wilson, Wilts & Dorset, Dr J. R. Young, John K. Young.

Scottish reports should be sent, please, to **Sandy Macdonald, 12 Morton Gardens, Maxwell Park, Glasgow, G41 4AF** or by e-mail to **sandybus@aol.com** to reach him by 19 July for the October issue.

Aberfeldy Motors

Onyx C24F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 614D V2 AMS was new last October while Van Hool C49F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 27 (W6 AMS) arrived in April. Bova FHD12-340 M384 WET and Van Hool-bodied Volvo B10M-60 K813 HUM were re-registered XSV 234, 893 respectively earlier this year.

Addison, Callander

Carlyle-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa G271 GKG had returned to service by June.

Afrin, Stornoway

The contract to operate Monday to Saturday evening journeys between Stornoway and Newvalley passed to Graham, Vatisker on 21 April.

Allan, Gorebridge

Indcar C29F-bodied Iveco EuroMidi CC80E18M/PS WSU 223/4 were new in April. Van Hool C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 L630 PSF (WSU 224, L630 PSF, GSV 452, L650 AYS, HSK 651) was sold at that time to AW Group (dealer), Ratby while Adamson C24F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 612D CSU 253 (P593 CFT) passed to Urquhart, Grantown in June although the registration is expected to return to this firm shortly.

Allander, Milngavie

C49Ft Bova FHD12-370 AT40 (W128 BGB) was new in May. Plaxton-bodied Volvo B7Rs W36/7 XDS have been numbered AT38/9 and Duple-bodied Volvo B10M-61 AT04 (OJI 5506, OHE 264X) has been re-registered EKS 83X.

Allison, Newton Stewart

Duple-bodied Bedford YMT OFV 288T (MAN 111P, OFV 288T) was sold last year to McCulloch, Stoneykirk.

Arriva Scotland West AA

Plaxton Pointer B39F-bodied Dennis Dart SLF S775 RNE entered service from Inchinnan depot in May, presumably on loan for a period. The acquisition reported in the February issue of Wright NimBus B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 334 (K150 BRF) should be deleted from records as it did not join the fleet.

Plaxton Prestige-bodied DAF SB220GG 490 has been given a mainly orange advertising livery with contravision for easyJet. Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 251/3 and 711Ds 262/3/5 have been repainted into corporate livery, 253 having previously carried an advertising livery for the Clydeside Bus Ticket Lottery. Scania L113CRL 502 has not yet been painted into turquoise and stone, contrary to previous reports.

Correcting the report in the May issue, 633 is of course a Leyland Leopard, rather than a Tiger.

Optare MetroRiders 211/2/5 (H713/04/1 UNW) did not go to a Channel Islands operator as anticipated last month but have gone to Horsburgh, Pumpherton instead.

Berry, Fyvie

Alexander B53F-bodied Ford R1114 USO 172S was acquired last August from EJS Training, Drumlithe and has been used as a store. Plaxton-bodied Bedford YMT RBZ 8495 (HUH 995W) was sold to Reid, Rhynie in April.

Browning, Whitburn

Duple C47F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2R CSO 388Y (TSV 777, ASA 7Y) was purchased earlier this year ex-Rowe, Muirkirk.

Bruce, Maud

Onyx C24F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 614D T9 TAP was acquired in June ex-Malcolm, Cowdenbeath.

Burns, Tarves

Caetano Optimo C21F-bodied Toyota Coaster BB50R W244 GSE was new in April.

Buskers, Galashiels

This company has been successful in tendering for additional school contract work in the Kelso area, some of which is for a five-year period.

FLEET IN FOCUS

FLEET:	EVE Coaches
BASED:	Spott Road, Dunbar, East Lothian
FOUNDED:	The company was started about 27 years ago by Edward and Vona Scougall with their son Edward (hence the EVE name) as a taxi operation. The first coach was bought in 1980, a six-month old Plaxton-bodied Ford R1114 which was sold only a few months ago.
WHERE DOES IT OPERATE?:	Local bus services are operated on behalf of East Lothian Council, including Dunbar-North Berwick and the 'Gaberlunzie' semi-fixed route facility throughout East Lothian. School contracts, private hires, Scottish tours (including work for the National Trust), extended tours abroad and rail replacement work are also undertaken.
LIVERY:	Since 1985 all vehicles have been painted in a cream, brown and beige livery to a standard design scaled to suit each individual vehicle.
HOW MANY VEHICLES?:	Operator's licence allows for 15 vehicles and 14 are currently owned.
MOST UNUSUAL VEHICLE?:	Unusual vehicles have been owned in the past including a Wadham Stringer-bodied Bedford YMQ for local services and a Setra coach which had been rescued from the depths of Loch Lomond and refurbished. Currently, an Alexander ALX200-bodied Volvo B6BLE and an Optare Solo (in green Gaberlunzie livery) are relatively rare in a Scottish independent fleet.



Above:
GSU 370, a 1989 Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D on local service work with EVE in North Berwick.
SANDY MACDONALD



Left:
R630 GSC, EVE's Alexander ALX200-bodied Volvo B6LE purchased for use on the five-year contract to provide the East Lothian Council service between Dunbar and North Berwick.
Photographed in Dunbar.
SANDY MACDONALD

First Aberdeen 6 (W6 FAL), one of the articulated Volvo B7LAs with Wright Eclipse Fusion bodywork, pulls away from outside Guild Street bus station.
BILLY NICOL



EDINBURGH OVERGROUND

From 24 July First Edinburgh was expected to launch a Glasgow-style Overground network in Edinburgh, increasing competition with Lothian Buses in the process. First Edinburgh is reported to have around 20% of the Edinburgh bus market at present with Lothian Buses having most of the rest.

The new network will comprise cross-city services 55 (previously C55), Wester Hailes to Restalrig; 66, Balerno to Wallyford; 86, Clerwood to Birkenhead; and 129, Silverknowes to Seton Sands. In each case, the frequency will be increased from the previous 12 or 15 minutes to 10 minutes throughout the day. While these routes will comprise the Overground, service 43 will also be increased to operate every 20 minutes instead of half-hourly on Queensferry Road and service 74 will be doubled to a half-hourly frequency between Birkenhead and Sainsburys.

These service enhancements within Edinburgh are being achieved at the expense of some routes in the more rural parts of the Lothians, with at least 18 buses being transferred into the city from Midlothian and East Lothian although this is partly the result of losing subsidised service contracts to other firms. Service 64 (Edinburgh-Penicuik) is to be halved in frequency and 65 (West End-Penicuik) is being withdrawn completely; 134 (Edinburgh-Musselburgh) is also to be withdrawn with part of the route covered by service C3, which is being withdrawn between Musselburgh and Whitecraig.

The company will no longer operate Midlothian Council

tendered services C70 (Wester Hailes-Roslin), 137 (Edinburgh-Ratho) and 315 (Edinburgh-Penicuik).

ST ANDREW SQUARE BUS STATION

As reported on page 21, the closure of Edinburgh's St Andrew Square bus station for redevelopment ('Scottish Column' June) was postponed from the anticipated date of 30 April by a last-minute hitch and did not take place until after the close of business on Saturday 1 July. From that date, all buses and coaches displaced have operated from stances in several nearby streets, with staff from City of Edinburgh Council in attendance to oversee operations and provide assistance to passengers throughout most of the operational day.

Of the 13 temporary stances provided, stances 1 (Forth Valley and Queensferry), 2/3 (express services to the west), 4 (Fife and north local services), 5 (express services to the north) and 6 (express services to the south and Belfast) are on the south side of St Andrew Square. Stance 7 (East Lothian and Berwick) is on the west side of North St David Street, while stances 8/9 (West Lothian via Sighthill), 10/11 (West Lothian via Corstorphine) and 12/13 (Scottish Borders and Dumfries) are on the south side of Waterloo Place. In addition, buses for Heriot-Watt University use an existing bus stop in this street.

These arrangements are expected to remain in place until the new bus station opens in 2002.

Caber, Aberfeldy

Whittaker-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D HIW 844 (C512 JAK) was given back its original registration in March.

Cityliner, Greenock

Jonckheere C28Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-62 L30 CAP was purchased in May ex-Capital, West Drayton, immediately re-registered ALZ 8697 and painted into Scottish Citylink colours. Plaxton-bodied B10M-62 ALZ 8697 (N286 OYE) has been given back its original registration.

Clyde Coast, Ardrossan

Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 V2 GLF was new in February and is in Perry Golf livery.

Coakley, Motherwell

Plaxton Beaver-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814Ds W10, 50 CBC are B31F and B27F respectively. Further recent additions are Robin Hood B25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D E72 MVV ex-MK Metro 72, and similar Reeve Burgess Beaver B27F-bodied C12 CBC (F704 KFM) ex-Arriva Cymru MMM704.

Collison, Stonehouse

Van Hool Alizée C51Ft-bodied DAF SB3000WS R26 VSM was acquired in May ex-MacEwan, Amisfield.

Cosgrove, Monifeith

Two vehicles acquired in May were Iveco C19F-bodied Iveco 49.10 L259 HKS ex-Park, Wooler and Robin Hood C12F-bodied Iveco 40.10 N698 FLN ex-Alexander, Gorebridge. Caetano C18F-bodied Iveco 60.10 GIL 3115 (B976 XSL) was sold at that time.

Crawford, Neilston

Van Hool Alizée C49Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-55 W285 WCS was new in March.

Dart, Paisley

Caetano Nimbus-bodied Dennis Dart SLF demonstrator V674 FPO was on loan during June.

B73 (D522 DSX), an Alexander P-type B57F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/2RH acquired earlier in the year by Scotway of Paisley, was operating in Dart livery by late-June.

Operation of new Strathclyde Passenger Transport Monday to Saturday service 397 (East Kilbride-Eaglesham via Lindsayfield and Hairmyres Hospital) was due to start on 17 July.

Dearman, Alness

Mellor M14FL-bodied Iveco 49.10 V409 KAS was new to this operator last October.

Docherty, Irvine

Wright Crusader-bodied Volvo B6BLE demonstrator V493 NOH was on loan from 19-23 June and used on the local services.

Plaxton C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-62 N396 RGA (96 G 483) joined this fleet in May ex-Cummer, Galway. With reference to the June issue, Bova 8723 ED was previously registered T423 TGA.

C859 EML, the unusual Plaxton Bustier DP37C-bodied Volvo B10M-46 sold last year, passed to Dumfries & Galloway Council in June.

Doig, Glasgow

Irizar Century C49Ft-bodied Scania K124IB W353 MKY was new in April and Park Royal H44/24D-bodied Leyland Fleetline FE30ALR QJD 143R has been acquired ex-Mullany, Watford. Alexander-bodied Ailsa NSP 338R is now out of use.

Dunn, Port Glasgow

A new service between Kilblain Street and Braeside in Greenock was started on 15 June.

Essbee, Coatbridge

Leyland National 11351/1R-B50F MIL 7620 (TOE 512N) was acquired in March ex-Arriva North West 420.

First Aberdeen FG

Articulated Volvo B7LA 2 (W2 FAL) had still to arrive by late-June. Further to the July issue, use of this type on route 12 (Northfield-Torry) lasted only a few hours, ending with a jack-knifing incident at Northfield. Allocation then moved to route 15/14 (Kingswells-Balgownie Drive) for a couple of weeks before settling on route 27 (Guild Street-Aberdeen Airport), so that the normal all-day bus on this route is now a B7LA and the peak period duplicate is a Leyland Olympian. The remaining B7LAs continue to be allocated to routes 1-4 (Garthdee/Auchincryll-Bridge of Don) albeit on Monday to Saturday daytime only, as the company considers them too big for use at other times.

More coaches have been transferred between the First Aberdeen and Mairs Coaches fleets. Jonckheere Deauville P589 C51Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 89 (737 ABD, F950 RNV) and similar B10M-60 90 (WSU 447, G171 RBD) were previously numbered 732/4 in the Mairs fleet, while Plaxton Paramount 3200 C57F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 44 (ESK 957, F104 HSO) and Plaxton Paramount 3200 C35F-bodied Dennis Javelin 8.5SDL 47 (LSK 476, G166 HMS) have gone to Mairs where they are numbered 744/38. With these changes, the only standard coaches left in this fleet are Volvo B58 40, retained because of its dual role as a trainer, and MCW Metronders 432/3 which are now part of the main bus fleet and carry First Aberdeen fleetnames on their coach livery.

Leyland Olympian 125 has been given its stripes and is therefore in full fleet livery.

Following the entry into service of the new Volvo B7LAs, Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlanteans 307/10-3/5/9 (NRS 307/10-3/5W, URS 319X) were withdrawn and 307 was immediately transferred to Mairs Coaches. Their withdrawal leaves similar 316 as the last bus in First Aberdeen service in GRT livery. Similar 303 (NRS 303W), latterly Mairs 726, has been sold to Dunsmore (dealer), Larkhall for scrap.

First Edinburgh FG

Former Gaberlunzie-liveried Omni 1739 has been repainted into First Edinburgh colours and operates from Dalkeith depot, having languished on the pits of Musselburgh depot for most of the last year. Other recent recipients of these colours are Leyland Tiger 315 and Leyland Olympian 952.

First Glasgow FG

SV577-84 were the first of the new Alexander ALX300 B44F-bodied Volvo B10BLEs to enter service from Larkfield depot on service 66.

Caetano Nimbus B34F-bodied Dennis Dart SLF demonstrator V674 FPO was on loan in May and operated from Cumbernauld depot.

Alexander TE C49F-bodied Dennis Dorchester SDA806 CD289 (A109 UYS) and similar TS B53F-bodied SDA804 SD14 (A104 RGE) have been converted to aid buses for use in Kosovo, having been repainted into a mainly white livery with First Glasgow and First Aid lettering. They are to be joined by other buses from Scottish FirstGroup fleets for a similar role and are expected to leave in convoy for their destination in early August.

First Stop, Renfrew

Mercedes-Benz 709Ds F766 FDV and F402 KOD, with Reeve Burgess Beaver B25F and DP25F bodywork respectively, were acquired in May ex-Stagecoach Oxford 329/44.

Fitzcharles, Grangemouth

Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M-62 P3 BUS passed to Smith, Coupar Angus in June.

Galloway, Harthill

Alexander T-type C49F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3G/4R RSC 190Y and Alexander TE C47F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRBTL11/2R MNS 10Y were acquired in January, having previously been Stagecoach Fife 290, 470 respectively.

Three vehicles sold to Tiger (dealer), Salsburgh around April were Duple Dominant C49F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4Rs CFS 116S, ASP 209T (NSU 134, GSG 1347) and Willowbrook Warrior B53F-bodied Leopard PSU3G/4R MIB 5088 (CNH 172X).

Gibson, Moffat

A new coach for this operator is C49Ft Bova FHD12-370 W365 OSM which arrived in May.

Gibson, Renfrew

Reeve Burgess B20F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D E421 AFT was acquired in March ex-Stagecoach Busways 1421. It was followed in April by similar B25F-bodied F740 FDV ex-Stagecoach Devon 422 and F764 FDV ex-Stagecoach Oxford 327.

Goosecroft, Denny

Robin Hood C29F-bodied Iveco 49.10 J328 RVT was acquired in May ex-Rumplan, Newcastle.

Grangeburn, Motherwell

Alexander-bodied Leyland Atlantean SCN 285S, Park Royal-bodied Atlantean XPG 177T and Duple-bodied Ford R1115 BUT 522Y had all left the fleet by May.

Guide Friday

A new operating centre has been added at Rapson's Coaches' Inverness depot. Until now, Inverness tours have been run by Stagecoach Bluebird using its own vehicles in Guide Friday livery.

HAD Coaches, Shotts

The award of further Strathclyde Passenger Transport contracts for Dial a Bus and local services requires the purchase of more Optare Solos, and at least 23 are now due. It is likely that they will be in Optare's blue and silver colours rather than carmine and cream.

Hall, Kennoway

Additions in June comprised Leyland National 10351A/1R-B21DL YYE 290T ex-Arriva Kent Thameside 494 and Leyland Lynx LX2R11C15Z45-B49F G44 VME ex-Arriva Kent & Sussex 411.

Vehicles sold to Ensign (dealer), Purfleet in June comprised Alexander-bodied MCW Metrobus DR102 JLL 8213 (*DEM 761Y*); Duple-bodied Leyland Tiger CSO 389Y (*TSV 776, ASA 8Y*); and Hispano-bodied DAF SB220 G365 CLE (*CAP 2, G365 CLE, TIB 397M*).

Harlequin, Dunblane

Caetano Optimo C21F-bodied Toyota Coaster HB31R E767 HJF had joined this fleet by the end of last year ex-Fairley, Tudhoe. It was quickly re-registered VIJ 6805.

Harte, Greenock

With the imminent arrival of two Plaxton Mini Pointer Darts, Optare Vecta B40F-bodied MAN 11.190 IB 6819 (*L822 XMR*) was being offered for sale in June.

Harvey, Port Glasgow

This company had its operator's licence revoked from 14 June, following an investigation and public inquiry by the Traffic Commissioner. Registrations for the Port Glasgow circular, Kilblain Street-Braeside and Port Glasgow-IBM factory were cancelled by the Traffic Commissioner at that time. Subsequently, however, the company lodged an appeal with the Transport Tribunal.

Horsburgh, Pumpherston

Plaxton Beaver 2 DP31F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814Ds W594-7 PFS were new in June. Other recent additions are B23F Optare MetroRider MR09s H701/4/13 UNW ex-Arriva Scotland West 215/2/1.

Houstoun, Uphall Station

Plaxton Beaver 2 B27F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D W806 PKS was new in May and is being used in an all-over dark blue livery on West Lothian Council tendered services 431 (Blackridge-Livingston, Sundays), 498 (Bathgate-Fauldhouse circular, one weekday journey) and the Monday to Friday Whitburn Wanderer town service.

Hutchison, Overtown

Wright Crusader B37F-bodied Volvo B6BLE V493 NOH was on loan during late-May and early-June. With reference to the June issue, there does not appear to be an Optare Excel registered W51 WDS and further to last month's issue, the Van Hool-bodied DAF coaches acquired from MacEwan, Amisfield are registered R27/8 VSM.

Irvine, Law

Marcopolo C53F-bodied Dennis Javelin 12SDAs N791/2 SJU were sold to Scania Coach Sales (dealer), Workop in March.

Irvine, Salsburgh

Marshall B51F-bodied AEC Reliance AUS 418S and Duple Dominant B51F-bodied Reliance HGA 747T had been sold to Tiger (dealer), Salsburgh by May.

Jay, Greengairs

Alexander H46/32F-bodied Dennis Dominator DDA133s KKK 101/4W were purchased in June from Stagecoach Fife, having previously been in the Allison, Dunfermline fleet. Plaxton C51F-bodied DAF MB200 ANA 451Y (*6308 YG, ANA 451Y*) passed to Gilchrist, Chapelton in June.

JD Travel, Calderbank

Alexander H44/35F-bodied Ailsa B55-10 OSC 57V was acquired last year from Stagecoach Fife where it was numbered 857. Another former Stagecoach Fife bus, Alexander B53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3F/4R CSF 158W, was purchased in March from Docherty, Irvine.

Keenan, Coalhall

Leicester Carriage Builders C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D R898 WOC passed to Boyd, Paisley in May.

Keir, Glass

A Plaxton-bodied Dennis Javelin and a Plaxton Cheetah-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario are due to be delivered to this operator in the near future.

Keir, Kemnay

Mellor C20FL-bodied Iveco 49.10 G200 GSG was acquired in December ex-Royal Blind School, Edinburgh and Van Hool C51F-bodied DAF MB230 M825 RCP was added in May ex-Boni, Edinburgh.

Key, Johnstone

When the Delta, Paisley business was acquired in July last year, Carlyle B20F-bodied Freight Rover Sherpa D57 TLV was included in the deal together with the two Ford Transits previously reported. Made to Measure-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D K32 WND carries fleetnumber M32.

King, Kirkcowan

Caetano C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 E990 CHS (*RIJ 774, E704 HKV*) was acquired by Martin, Limerick in June.

Kirkpatrick, Banchory FG

MCW Metrorider 914 still carries Grampian Executive silver livery and fleetnames, but is likely to become the first vehicle in this fleet to carry the new coach livery, later this summer.

Lindsay, Lochboisdale

Duple C53F-bodied Ford R1114 EJX 858Y was purchased about two years ago ex-Woolfitt, Blackpool.

Lippen, Johnstone

With reference to the June issue, the Plaxton Beaver 2-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario new in March is L2 PPN.

Local, Greenock

The Local Bus Company Ltd of Greenock, a new operator, was due to start local service operation on 10 July with a 12-minute, seven days per week service between Glasgow city centre and Paisley Cross. This will operate in competition with Arriva Scotland West, Dickson, and First Glasgow throughout its length.

Lochs, Leurbost

Marshall B33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D N229 MUS was sold to Blythwood (dealer), Glasgow in February.

Lothian

Delivery commenced in June of the next batch of Plaxton President-bodied Dennis Tridents, the first to enter service being 546-9 (*W546-9 RSG*), further single-door examples in Airlink blue and grey livery which allowed the frequency of that service to be increased at the end of June. These new buses are similar to the previous batch apart from a different arrangement of rear vents and revised configuration of interior tables and luggage racks. They also have a table on the upper deck and 'Welcome to Lothian Buses' etched on the entrance step.

Lothian 433 (P433 KSX), the coach-seated Volvo Olympian painted in a striking livery for the shuttle service between Edinburgh city centre at the former Royal Yacht Britannia.

RICHARD WALTER



The imminent arrival of four new open-top Tridents will allow the transfer of at least four open-top Leyland Olympians to the Oxford Classic Tour, resulting in the withdrawal of the remaining open-top Leyland Atlanteans in the fleet.

OSJ 636R, the former Stagecoach Western Leyland Leopard PSU3/3R with unique Alexander O49F body, entered service on 17 June in a livery of white with tartan skirt and band, and lettered as 'The Royal Park Charabanc'. It is being used on a new 50-minute tour of this name which offers six departures per day until 9 September from Waverley Bridge, live commentary, and 'the best panoramic views of the city' while visiting Holyrood Palace, Dynamic Earth Exhibition, The Queen's Drive, Arthur's Seat, Salisbury Crags and Dunsapie Loch. Although the vehicle does not carry a fleet number, tickets issued on it show number 669.

As anticipated, Volvo Olympian 433 has been given a dedicated livery for service X50 (Waverley Bridge-Britannia Visitor Centre) of allover white with a contravision detail of the bow of the Britannia rising over the rear offside and nearside. It has also been refurbished internally with the now-standard blue trim on its coach seats.

Although withdrawn from passenger service, Caetano Optimo-bodied Toyota Coaster 70 is being used for crew transport, specifically coach drivers between Marine Garage and Edinburgh city centre, and is allover white with no fleetnames or numbers.

1982 Alexander H47/28D-bodied Leyland Olympian ONTL11/1R 667 (GSC 667X), the only one of its type in the fleet since the demise of similar 666, has been withdrawn from service and is in the care of the Edinburgh Transport Group for preservation.

Unique (in the UK) B43D-bodied Leyland Lynx LX2Rs 177-88 (H177-88 OSG) were sold in June to Ramm (dealer). Sudden together with a substantial number of ECW H50/31D-bodied Leyland Olympian ONTL11/2Rs including 668-70 (OFS 668-70Y).

McColl, Balloch

MCW H43/30F-bodied MCW Metrobus DR102/22 LOA 342X, previously Travel West Midlands 2342, was acquired last November.

McCulloch, Stoneykirk

Duple C53F-bodied Bedford YMT OFV 288T (*MAN 111P, OFV 288T*) was acquired last year ex-Kiwi, Newton Stewart.

McEwan, Amisfield

Van Hool Alizée-bodied DAF SB3000WS R26 VSM was sold to Collision, Stonehouse in May. Similar R27/8 VSM were sold to Hutchison, rather than R27/9 VSM as stated in last month's issue.

MacKay, Dalbeg

Berkhof-bodied AEC Reliance YFN 251 (*ROI 876, A199 TAR, HFN 54L*), Reeve Burgess-bodied Dodge S56 D275 TGE (*A6 BUS, D132 LTA*) and AVB-bodied Ford Transit L165 PKU had all gone by May.

McKendry, Loanhead

Further to last month's issue, W272 MKY is a Scania L94IB and has C49Ft coachwork. Leyland National NL116L11/1R-B48F NLS 989W was acquired last September ex-Stagecoach Western 789.

McKindless, Wishaw

Wright Handybus B36F-bodied Dennis Dart 9SDL JDZ 2403, previously London United DWL3, was acquired in April. Further to the July issue, Leyland Lynx E116 UTX was latterly Arriva Cymru SLC116 and has been re-registered SIL 1813.

McKinnon, Kilchattan

Caetano Optimo C21F-bodied Toyota Coaster HB31R G961 SFT had left Colonsay for Prince, Whitegate by the end of last year.

MacLennan, Laxay

The Plaxton Beaver 2-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario T49 JBA mentioned last month is owned by Peter MacLennan (as reported correctly last September) rather than Alistair MacLennan and should not therefore have appeared under this heading.

MacLeod, Rogart

Excel C24FL-bodied Mercedes-Benz 614D V746 EHE was new to this operator by February. Jonckheere C51Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 E238 HCD (*TDY 388, HSK 834, E697 NNH*) followed in March ex-Barnett, Bedford. It replaced Jonckheere C51F-bodied Scania K112 21 CWP (*PGE 303Y, 9712 WX, DLX 44Y*) which was sold to Vale (dealer), Great Kinghill at that time.

MacMillan, Northbay

Not previously recorded was the acquisition by this Barra operator about four years ago of Alexander B53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/3Rs G5U 829/34T, previously Kelvin Central 1529/494.

MacNeil, Castlebay

Autobus Classique C33F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 814D L403 RCT was acquired in April 1996 ex-Winrow, Heywood while a more recent purchase is Mellor C25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 711D N398 FFS which arrived in June ex-A1 Coaches, Methilhill.

Mairs, Aberdeen FG

Plaxton Paramount 3200 C57F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 744 (ESK 957, *F104 HSO*) and Plaxton Paramount 3200 C35F-bodied Dennis Javelin 8.5SDL 738 (LSK 476, *G166 HMS*) have joined this fleet from First Aberdeen where they were numbered 44/7. 744 has been repainted into the new coach livery described last month; first recipient 735 has now had the finishing touches added making the scheme similar to the corporate coach livery used by First Beeline and First Western National.

Another acquisition is Alexander H45/29D-bodied Leyland Atlantean AN68C/1R 727 (NRS 307W) ex-First Aberdeen 307. It retains its ivory and green livery but with maroon Mairs Coaches fleetnames and large First Aberdeen-style fleetnumbers added.

Jonckheere Deauville P599 C51Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-61 732 (737 ABD, *F950 RNV*) and similar B10M-60 734 (WSU 447, *G171 RBD*) have moved in the opposite direction to First Aberdeen. Other recent disposals comprise Plaxton C48Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-62 702 (PSU 627, *N500 TCC*), Jonckheere Deauville P599 C51Ft-bodied B10M-60 706 (FSU 333, *G845 GNV*) and Irizar InterCentury C51Ft-bodied Scania L94IB 714 (P20 GRT).

Marbill, Beith

Made to Measure-bodied Mercedes-Benz 609D AJL 8353 was previously registered K667 NGB rather than K668 NGB as stated in the June issue.

Marshall, Baillieston

Plaxton-bodied Volvo B10M-60 WIW 3627 (*G79 BLD*) was given back its original registration in March before being sold to Vale (dealer), Great Kinghill.

Meffan, Kirriemuir YT

Plaxton C57F-bodied Leyland Tiger TRCTL11/3RZ D499 GSP (*7067 ED, D748 EES*) has been acquired ex-Miller, Calderbank.

Merlins Ark, Laurencekirk

Further to last month's report, Leyland National EPD 538V is to be used for spares only.

Mid Argyll, Lochgilphead

David Stewart, trading as Mid Argyll Taxis, began operating Argyll & Bute Council shared taxi service 427 (Kilmichael Glassary-Ford) on 3 July, offering one or two journeys per day on Mondays to Fridays.

Moffat & Williamson, Gauldry

Van Hool Alizée-bodied Volvo B10M-60 FSU 372 (*K825 HUM*) had been resealed C53Ft ex-C50F and repainted allover white ex-NST Travel livery by June.

Park, Hamilton

Van Hool Alizée-bodied Volvo B10M-62s to find new homes recently include N261/2 PYS (*N313/4 BYA*) to National Holidays 99/7 in April; P226 YGG (*KSK 977*) to Lakeland, Hurst Green in May; and LSK 498/9, 845 (*LSK 555*) to subsidiary company Trathens, Plymouth in May.

PD Travel, Glasgow

From 3 July various service registrations were cancelled to allow resources to be concentrated on increasing the frequency on the Failley-Partick bus station service. Those cancelled comprised Dalmuir West-Glasgow city centre, Old Kilpatrick-Whitecrook and Failley-Glasgow city centre.

Prentice, Haddington

Caetano C35F-bodied Volvo B6-45 M609 UCX was acquired in May ex-Abbeyways-Hanson, Halifax.

Prentice, West Calder

Kässbohrer Setra S215HD-C49Ft E492 GPK (*3553 FH, E492 GPK*) was purchased in May ex-Bennett, Hayes End.

Reid, Rhynie

Plaxton C53F-bodied Bedford YMT RBZ 8495 (*HUH 995W*) was acquired in April from Berry, Fyvie.

Ross, Renfrew

Reeve Burgess DP25F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds F729 FDV and F412 KOD were acquired in May ex-Stagecoach Devon 413/42.

Rowe, Muirkirk

Duple-bodied Leyland Leopard CSO 388Y (*TSV 777, ASA 7Y*) is now with Browning, Whitburn.

Scotguide (Pringle), Glasgow

DP25F Optare MetroRider J582 CUB was added to the Scotguide fleet in May. It is in a lilac and white livery for use on an architectural tour of Glasgow and was previously used at Heathrow Airport by Apcoa, Sunbury.

Scottish Coaches, Edinburgh

This new operator has started trading with vehicles in a blue and white livery similar to that used by the former Scottish Bus Group for its Scotland-London coach services. W512/3 XDS are a pair of Kässbohrer Setra S315GT coaches which were new in May, while similar C48Ft-bodied S250 P213 RUU was acquired ex-Redwing, London in April and immediately re-registered C10 SCL. The other vehicles being used are Caetano Optimo C18F-bodied Toyota Coaster BB50Rs P590 WGD, R909 HUS ex-Prestige Tours, Glasgow and C44Ft-bodied EOS E180Zs T105/6 AUA which were latterly First Edinburgh 2505/6 and liveried for Prestige Tours offshoot Scottish Sightseeing.

Group codes

AA	—	Arriva
		Passenger
		Services
DG		DelGro
FG	—	FirstGroup
NX	—	National
		Express
		Group
RN	—	Rapsons
ST	—	Stagecoach
YT	—	Yorkshire
		Traction



Two of the open-top tour bus operators in Scotland and Edinburgh have added midibuses to their fleets this year. While Mac Tours in Edinburgh has ex-Blackpool Optare CityPacers, Scotguide is operating a new programme of architectural tours of Glasgow using this former Apcoa MetroRider. BILLY NICOL

Shiel, Acharacle

In May this firm became a limited company and was granted a new licence in the name of Shiel Buses Ltd. Vehicles transferred to the new business comprised Bedford YNT A446 BGM; Ford Transit H891 URM; Mercedes-Benz 410D J467 NLA; Mercedes-Benz 412D P393 LSG; Mercedes-Benz 614D V735 EHE; Mercedes-Benz 711D N778 OGA; Volvo B10M-46s JIL 3961 (G402 XMK, G605 XMD), H251 XDS and Volvo B10M-61 F231 DWF.

Shuttle Buses, Kilwinning

B31F Optare MetroRider MR03 J934 JJR and similar DP31F J939 JJR were acquired in June, having previously been Go Northern 334/9. Another recent addition is Ford Transit S515 GGD ex-Strathford (dealer), Kilmarnock.

J939 JJR was quickly re-registered VJI 3001, Reeve Burgess-bodied Mercedes-Benz L608D VJI 3001 (D40 UAO) reverting to its original registration at that time.

Alexander DP19F-bodied L608D D238 URG is out of use and unlikely to see further service following engine failure. Dormobile B25F-bodied Renault S46s E634/44 DCK were sold to Ramm (dealer), Sudden in part-exchange for the MetroRiders.

Silver Fox, Renfrew

Plaxton C53F-bodied Leyland Leopard PSU3E/4R IBZ 1672 (PNB 807W) was purchased in May ex-Collins, Bangor.

Simpson, Rosehearty

Jonckheere C51F-bodied Volvo B10M-60 JIL 3585 (G841 GNV) was purchased in May ex-D Coaches, Morriston.

Slocoach, Motherwell

Marshall-bodied Mercedes-Benz Varios T578/9 KGB are B31F.

Smith, Coupar Angus

Jonckheere-bodied Volvo B10M-62s P3 BUS (C51F) and S67 UBO (C49Ft) were purchased in June ex-Fitzcharles, Grangemouth and Bebb Travel, Llantwit Fardre respectively.

Stagecoach Bluebird ST

Vehicles taken into this fleet during May from other group companies comprised Alexander Sprint B23F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709D 261 (G261 TSL) ex-Stagecoach Western 062; similar B25F-bodied 278

(G255 TSL) ex-Stagecoach Western 282, 300 (J216 XKY) ex-Stagecoach Western 283, 322-4 (K319-21 YKG) ex-Stagecoach Red & White 319-21; similar Reeve Burgess Beaver B25F-bodied 277 (J277 OSJ) ex-Stagecoach Western 066; Plaxton Premiere 350 C50F-bodied Volvo B10M-60s 610 (K758 FYG, 83 CBD, K758 FYG), 611 (K759 FYG, VLT 255, K759 FYG) ex-Stagecoach United Counties 146/7; and Jonckheere Mistral 50 C44Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-62 621 (T667 XTV) ex-Stagecoach East Midland 667.

Plaxton Expressliner 2 C44Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-62 618 (N618 USS) has been transferred to Stagecoach Midland Red.

Stagecoach Fife ST

Leyland Leopard 290 (RSC 190Y) and Leyland Tiger 470 (MNS 10Y), both with Alexander bodywork, passed to Galloway, Harthill in January. Former Allison, Dunfermline Alexander-bodied Dennis Dominators KKK 101/4W were sold to Jay, Greengairs in June.

Stagecoach Western ST

Leyland H44/29F-bodied Leyland Titan TNLXB2RR 969 (A918 SYE) has been written off after sustaining accident damage. Alexander-bodied Mercedes-Benz 709Ds 062, 282 (G261/55 TSL), 283 (J216 XKY) and similar Reeve Burgess-bodied 066 (J277 OSJ) were transferred to Stagecoach Bluebird in May, while other vehicles sold to dealers at that time were Carlyle B29F-bodied Mercedes-Benz 811D 089 (H789 GTA); Plaxton Paramount 3500 C52F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 187 (B193 CGA, 495 FFJ, B193 CGA); and similar C49F-bodied 191 (B191 CGA, VCS 391, B191 CGA).

Steele, Annan

Ford R1114s UUX 386S and ERW 266T, with Plaxton C53F and Duple C53F coachwork respectively, were acquired at the end of 1998 ex-Leyland, Fulwood.

Stokes, Carstairs

The Strathclyde Passenger Transport contract for operation of the Lanark-Biggarr service was reduced to only one journey per day from 15 July, when another contractor was appointed for all other journeys.

Strathtay YT

East Lancs-bodied Dennis Dart SLF S401 HVV was received on loan from a dealer in late-June and was allocated to Dundee depot. It was used in allover white with a Strathtay logo on the front.

Stuart, Carluke

Plaxton B29F-bodied Dennis Dart MPD W895 AGA was new in May and entered service in allover white. Berkhof C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-61 FIL 7284 (BDV 867Y) is now licensed as a private vehicle and used by the proprietor as a stock car transporter.

Travel Dundee NX

Volvo Citybus 87, currently used as a school bus, was painted allover white in April and subsequently received lettering for Dundee & Tayside Chamber of Commerce.

Watermill, Fraserburgh

Plaxton Cheeta C29F-bodied Mercedes-Benz Vario O.814D W888 WCS was new in May.

Weir, Clydebank

Van Hool Alizée C53F-bodied Volvo B10M-62s M6, 7 BUS were acquired in May ex-Whitelaw, Stonehouse.

Whitelaw, Stonehouse

Van Hool Alizée C49Ft-bodied Volvo B10M-55s W674/5 WGG were new in April and were followed by Wright Crusader 2 B37F-bodied Volvo B6BLEs W672/3 WGG.

Wilson, Carnwath

Duple C53F-bodied Volvo B58-56 NNS 234V had been sold to Westwood (dealer), West Calder by last September.

Wilson, Rhu

B20FL Talbot Freeway L100 RHU was acquired by Location Transport, Manchester last year.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

N. Cram, T. & E. Docherty, C. Franchitti, D. Gordon, S. Hulse, D. McAdam, R. Mitchell, G. Munro, B. Nicol, S. Oliver, G. Page, PSV Circle, Ride the Royal Mail Postbus, Scottish Bus Site, Shuttle Buses, J. Sinclair, Stagecoach Bluebird, Stagecoach Glasgow, Stagecoach Western and R. Walter have contributed news items this month. Their assistance is gratefully acknowledged.

Right:
Following its acquisition of JW Coaches of Banchory, Stagecoach Bluebird has cascaded some Leyland Tigers, including Alexander TC-bodied 442 (B328 LSA) from its main fleet. They carry JW livery in Stagecoach style.
MURDOCH CURRIE



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IRISH MAJOR OPERATORS**Ulsterbus**

Two more minibuses funded by the Rural Transport Fund for operation by community groups are 78/9 (ECZ 7078/9), 12-seat Renault Masters to be based respectively at Enniskillen and Londonderry.

Back into service from reserve are Bristol RELL/Alexander 2254/85/92 (ROI 2254, TOI 2285/92) and Leyland Leopard/Alexander 158 (UOI 9158). However a longer list of Alexander-bodied buses delicensed comprises: Mercedes-Benz 709D 44 (MJI 3341) acquired in March 1990 with Donnell of Strabane's town service in Strabane; Leyland Leopard 136 (ROI 136) and Bristol RELL 2242/69/91/3/375/87/431 (ROI 2242/69, TOI 2291/3, UOI 2375/87, WOI 2431). Accident-damaged Leopard/Alexander 267 (YOI 2267) and Leyland Tiger/Alexander N-type 1178 (MXI 3178) — withdrawn after an electrical fire while in service — have also been taken out of service, while Leopard/Alexander 119 (ROI 119) — already in reserve — has been released for disposal.

The Coleraine depot fire (see last month's 'Fleet News') which destroyed Leopard 263 and Volvo B10M 1518, has been confirmed as malicious.

Among inter-depot transfers this month, the most interesting are inter-company with the arrival of four as yet unidentified Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown nearly new from Citybus at Newtownabbey for new Quality Corridor service 18A (Carryduff-Belfast); they are officially allocated to Downpatrick, but three are based at the tiny Saintfield outstation which now has its largest allocation for at least 30 years. Other inter-company transfers see Citybus Bristol RELL/Alexander 2561/7-9/71 (BXI 2561 etc) move over to Ulsterbus; 2561 moves from Short Strand to Ulsterbus Newtownabbey, 2567/8 from Citybus Newtownabbey to Newry and 2569/71 from Short Strand to Newtownards. 2653 (SXI 2653) is another Tiger/Alexander Q-type to move from Citybus Newtownabbey to Armagh. Within Ulsterbus, Leopards 174/8 (VOI 174/8) move from Larne to Coleraine and from Downpatrick to Newtownabbey respectively while RELL 2395 (UOI 2395) moves from Laganside to Craigavon.

More Busybus Mercedes-Benz 709D/Wright displaced by rural service Optare Solos are 870 (TXI 7870) from Omagh to Newtownards and 832/69 (NXI 6832, TXI 7869) from Enniskillen and Omagh respectively to Flexibus Belfast. In turn, two Flexibus Mercedes 609Ds have gone into reserve — Ulsterbus-converted 816 (NXI 816) and Scott-converted 55 (FAZ 3055, G622 GOS), the latter being one of several secondhand purchases in 1994.

Citybus

Optare Excel demonstrator 2018 (W438 CWX) ended its loan period on 11 May.

As anticipated last month, the last of the present deliveries of Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown, 2795-806 (BCZ 2795-806) entered service on Quality Corridor services 83/84 on 29 May. As a result, several older buses were released for transfer to Ulsterbus, including five of the last group of Bristol RELL/Alexanders delivered in 1984, 2561/7-9/71 (BXI 2561 etc) and Tiger/Q-type 2653 (SXI 2653).

RELL/Alexander 2469/73 (WOI 8469/73) have gone into reserve.

Two Q-type Tigers with super rear advertising have been repainted for new advertisers; 2671 (VXI 2671) promotes Belfast Zoo (ex-Herbal Essences) and 2680 (VXI 2680) promotes Fruit of the Loom (ex-Tennant's Lager).

Dublin Bus

Several chassis for AV1-185 (00 D 40001-100, 70101-85), the Alexander ALX400-bodied Volvo B7TLs, were at the bodybuilder's Falkirk premises in June, with delivery anticipated to begin by late-August.

With the progressive implementation of the recent driver pay and productivity deal, full-size buses (especially Olympian double-deckers) are appearing regularly on City Imp minibuses routes, especially 130 (Abbey Street-Castle Avenue) and 155 (College Street-Limekiln), while minibuses have been noted on big bus routes including the 42A and 51A.

Phibsboro depot is now known officially as Broadstone and work is due to start soon on the next stage of its expansion to handle additional Quality Bus Corridor commitments. When these notes were being compiled in late-June, most of the withdrawn KD-class Bombardier double-deckers and KC-class GAC single-deckers had been cleared from the site, with just KD106, 318 and KC17, 30, 43, 75, 95, 111/4 there along with withdrawn Leyland Atlanteans D378, 464, 576 and DAF-repowered DF413/69. All recent disposals have been to Clearways, Ringsend and all future KD/KC disposals will be direct from garages to scrapyards such as Louth Commercials, Clearways and Hammond Lane.

Three more withdrawals to note are of Phibsboro-based Bombardiers KD301/44 (GSI 301/44) and Conyngham Road's KD129 (129 JZL).

GAC KC121 has joined KC199 as a Nitelink ticket bus at Donnybrook, replacing KC81 which was withdrawn last February. The other current ticket buses — all convertible for either Nitelink duties or for standard daytime working — are KC38 (Summerhill) and KC198 (Clontarf).

As in the North, there has been a change in mega-rear advertisements, with DAF P3 (ex-Bank of Ireland), Olympian RA245 (ex-MGD beer), DAFs AD45, 68 and Olympians RA222, 312 all publicising new radio station Lite FM, while AD43, 67 advertise Fruit of the Loom clothing, Olympian RV385 announces the debut of singer Samantha Mumba (No 1 in the Irish charts in June), Olympians RH112 (ex-Club Orange), RA182 (ex-MGD), RH91 and RV468 promote HB Solero ice cream and RV458 (ex-Drinklink) promotes Bacardi, RH24 (ex-Smimoff) and RH158 (ex-Golden Pages) promote Bacardi. RH31 (MGD) and AD42 (Sli na Slainte) have lost their rear adverts. RA192 will shortly be the next Heinz Weightwatchers advert, replacing derooed RA190 which is still undergoing repair at Louth Commercials.

In early June, Heineken-liveried RA208 temporarily operated a shuttle service at Galway in connection with a music festival there.

A1, the Volvo B7LA/Wright Eclipse Fusion articulated demonstrator on the Stillorgan QBC, returned temporarily to the Ballymena bodybuilder in mid-May for cab modifications. Dublin Bus's own 20 of these vehicles are to be A1-20 (00 D 65001-20) and Volvo B6BLE/Wright Crusader 2 WV21-40 will be registered 00 D 70021-40.

RU2 (93 D 42062) is a newly-acquired Scania 92M

recovery unit for Donnybrook, the first support vehicle to be painted in City Swift colours which may become standard for the entire recovery fleet. Seddon Atkinson recovery vehicle RU2 (602 VZA) has been kept as a depot shunter.

Bus Eireann

A further 20 new rural service buses are to be acquired this year, but no details are available yet.

Meanwhile VWL101-4, the first of the 20 single-door Volvo B10BLE/Wright Renown previously expected to be VWL12-31, have arrived at Cork which also expects Volvo B6BLE/Wright Crusader 2 midibuses VWM1-10. DAF SB120CS/Wright Cadet DWM1-15 will all be allocated to Limerick, while Dennis/Plaxton Super Pointer Darts DPC1-21 are destined for Galway (15) and Waterford (six) and Mercedes-Benz Citaros MC1-20 are to be shared between Limerick (12) and Galway (eight), releasing DPL1-20 temporarily leased from Dawsonrentals.

The first six Volvo B7R/Plaxton Prima C57F in the batch VR1-55 had arrived in Dublin by 2 July; 40 are expected to be shared between Broadstone and Dundalk, five are for the south of Ireland and 10 for the Galway region.

Plaxton has caught up with the pace of delivery of Volvo B10M coaches, with VP321-42 all delivered; registrations for VP321-32/4-9/41/2 are 00 D 63332/5978/3334/5980/8619/5983/3337/72543/68 620/5988/92/72551/66/71/7/65999/72585/93/71602. Further to earlier reports, there have been some changes to their allocations, with VP314/8/37 now at Galway, VP315 to Limerick, VP319/29/30 at Stranorlar, while VP333/4 are at Dundalk, VP335 is at Waterford, VP336 is at Athlone, VP338/9/42 are at Cork and VP340/1 are at Broadstone. VP319 operates the new direct early morning 032 (Letterkenny-Dublin).

Early on Saturday 17 June, Irizar-bodied Scania L94 S11 (98 D 3418) overturned near Frenchpark, Co Roscommon while working the direct 07.30 service 022 (Ballina-Dublin). The driver and many of the 44 passengers sustained injuries (critical in a few cases) and most were treated for shock either at the roadside or in hospital. Bus Eireann is conducting a full investigation into the causes of the accident in which no other vehicle was involved. It is not known whether S11 (on three year lease from January 1998) will be repaired or returned to Scania in the UK.

Many of new leased Scania S161-71 are in

Right:
 Dublin Bus Omni
 low-floor minibus
 W1 (94 D 29001)
 near the
 coincidentally-named
 Omni Park shopping
 centre at Santry on
 15 April, the last day
 of operation both by
 the Omnis and of
 service 300. W1 had
 been the only
 serviceable Omni for
 the final two weeks
 of operation.
 IAN MOLLOY

Below right:
 Ulsterbus is carrying
 out a long-term
 evaluation of 2021
 (ECZ 9021), a Scania
 L94UB with Wright's
 new Solar body. It
 was photographed at
 Meeting House
 Street, Larne, the
 town where it's
 based for the first
 part of the trial.
 RAYMOND BELL



store at Westward Motors, the Scania distributor at Strokestown, Co Roscommon pending entry into service as replacements for leased Volvo B10Ms VP60-70.

VP21/5/6, 34/5/8-41/3-59 have already been withdrawn, but VP38-40/7-52 have returned to service at Broadstone (VP47), Tralee (VP48/9, 51/2) and Waterford (VP50), while VP25/6 are driver trainers at Cork and Waterford respectively. VP55 is understood to have been sold to Bus Eireann contractor T. Callanan, Claregalway and the others are in store at Broadstone awaiting disposal.

Service 352 (Waterford-Dungarvan/Ardmore) has been upgraded from 1991-delivered PD30/1 to 1997-built Caetano-bodied B10Ms KC95, 100, with PD30 now a spare at Waterford while PD31 has moved to Cork.

For the fourth successive summer, VC79 was due to operate international service 876 from 7 July to 25 August. The route has been extended from Stuttgart to Munich, but VC79 only operates the Dublin-Frankfurt section.

Dublin Bus Volvo Olympian RV628/9 have been borrowed again, this time for operation on service 103 (Dublin-Ashbourne/Kilmoon Cross) starting in early-July.

GAC Citybuses KC183/5 have been undergoing conversion to KCS-class single-door school buses at Thurles and KC145 has been similarly treated at Cork; KCS183/5 are expected to be allocated either to Thurles or Limerick and two more of Limerick's KCs are destined for similar treatment. GAC Rural buses KR184-6 and KR196/7 have been demoted to KS status at Cork and Limerick respectively, following the cascade of PDs from Waterford to Cork and VCs at Limerick for local services, and KR143 (previously Crazy Prices advert at Wexford) has also been

redesignated KS. Van Hool integrals EVH2/5 and Leyland Tiger/Alexander TE14, 27/9 have become EVS and TES school buses at Ballina.

Also withdrawn at Limerick is GAC Citybus KC187 (LZS 187).

School buses withdrawn are ex-Ulsterbus Leyland Leopard/Alexander LA23 (76 D 116) at Limerick, LA12/8 (75 D 78, 76 D 107) and Bedford BG38 (75 D 119) at Ballina, 12m Detroit Diesel-repowered Leopard MGS212 (212 IK) at Stranorlar, MGS19 (19 IK) at Dundalk, MGS 23, 56, 106 (23 IK etc), DAF-repowered MDS25, 117/92 (25 IK etc) and Bedford NJM(SB)/Marshall BM72 at Cork. Leyland-powered MS8 (8 IK) was continuing in use at Stranorlar until the end of the school term.

Further to last month's issue, several other service changes were introduced with the summer timetable. Provided driver rostering arrangements could be agreed, the southern portion of 051 (Cork-Limerick-Galway) was to be converted to an hourly shuttle from around 07.00 till after 20.00. 012 (Dublin-Limerick) has been retimed to reinstate the 15-minute refreshment stop at Borris-in-Ossory abandoned when the hourly shuttle began in May last year. Weekend journeys have been introduced on 030 (Donegal-Dublin direct), additional Sunday departures have been introduced on 022 (Dublin-Ballina) and 023 (Dublin-Sligo).

A new direct July/August coach service, 230 (Enniskillen-Dublin Airport) via Cavan, Navan and the M50 motorway, began on 3 July, using Ulsterbus Goldliner coach 1568. Departures from Enniskillen are at 07.30 and 15.00 and from the airport at 11.30 and 19.00.

New Friday-only shoppers' services introduced are 169

(Dundalk, serving Haggardstown) and 170 (Monaghan, serving Knockatallon and Scotstown), while additional workings have been added to several other services in Co Louth (e.g. 167/168, Dundalk-Ardee/Annagassan).

Special rural services near Mullingar (Finea-Shandonagh) first introduced in 1997/98 have been included in the timetable for the first time as 447/448 — numbers that seem geographically inappropriate as 446 and 450 are in Co Mayo. Similar special rural services near Ballymote (Tubbercurry-Boyle), introduced last year, have been included as 476/477.

IRISH INDEPENDENTS

Ards Tours (Bell), Newtownards

This operator's second ex-First Mainline Dennis Dominator/Alexander RH is NKU 161X. Following experience with Rolls-Royce-engined KKK 114W, this one was fitted with a Gardner engine before delivery.

Dualway (McConn), Rathcoole

A recent addition to the open-top fleet is East Lancs-bodied Leyland Atlantean 80 D 1371. The former owner has not been identified as yet.

Eirebus

A shuttle service, branded as the IFSC Business Bus, is being operated in Dublin, linking St Stephen's Green/Baggot Street with the Irish Financial Services Centre in the docklands. Vehicles observed to date have included Caetano-bodied midibus 91 D 41862 and Eurocoach-bodied midi 98 D 32944.

Morton, Rathfarnham

00 D 64065 is a new East Lancs-bodied Volvo Olympian received recently.

Viking Splash Tours, Dublin

Work on the green DUKW was well advanced in early June, with construction of canopy assembly completed. The blue DUKW had previously been in a museum in France. All four DUKWs came from Normandy and carry copious drivers' instructions in French.

Refurbishment has preserved a largely original appearance (apart from new canopy and rear steps) and they have Bedford engines, gearboxes and braking systems (with that distinctive bird's tweet when brakes are released). Original manual gearbox and transmission control levers are retained, unlike the London Frog Tours examples.

It's reported that one of these craft now carries an overall advertising livery for Boru vodka.

Left:

Now that it has committed itself to staying with Volvo for double-deckers, Dublin Bus has returned the Dennis Trident and DAF DB250 demonstrators. Trident DL2 (99 D 42) has stayed in Dublin, on further demonstration to airport operator Alan Martin Coaches. IAN MOLLOY



Below left:

Typical of some of the Bus Eireann rural services mentioned by Ian Molloy this month is Saturdays-only 468 (Longford-Newtowncassel) worked by Mercedes-Benz minibus ME209 (97 W 713) and seen here at Derraghan Cross. The same bus also works Saturday service 469 (Sligo-Drumshambo-Longford). GEOFF LUMB

BUSES BUSES BUSES

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E15909 Leyland PD1 Highbridge ISLE OF MAN.

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E26608 Plaxton Paramount 3500 BUS EIREANN.

Only our second model to be produced in an Irish livery is this Paramount in the distinctive colours of Bus Eireann. This model, which features fleet number PD5 registered 90 D 11005 carries bi-lingual route blinds to Ath Cliath, Dublin, is sure to be popular.



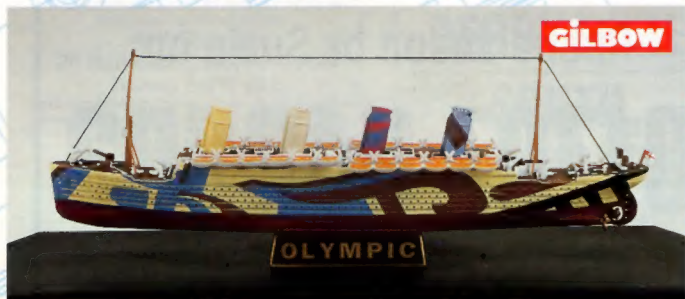
E26308 Guy Arab II Utility GREAT YARMOUTH.

Continuing to build our Great Yarmouth fleet is this Guy Utility bus which features fleet number 14, registered EX 5261 on route 2 to Fishwharf. The model is complete with the Great Yarmouth crest, fine lining to the body and a silver roof.



15907DL Leyland PD1 LYTHAM ST. ANNES

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12113 Harrington Cavalier MAIDSTONE & DISTRICT

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16318DL Bristol LS MIDLAND GENERAL

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